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TRAILS THROUGH WESTERN WOODS

Lake Angus McDonald

TRAILS THROUGH WESTERN WOODS

By

HELEN FITZGERALD SANDERS

Illustrations from Photographs by the Author

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DEDICATION

To the West that is passing; to the days
that are no more and to the brave,
free life of the Wilderness that
lives only in the memory of
those who mourn its loss

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PREFACE

The writing of this book has been primarily a labour of love, undertaken in the hope that through the harmonious mingling of Indian tradition and descriptions of the region—too little known—where the lessening tribes still dwell, there may be a fuller understanding both of the Indians and of the poetical West.

A wealth of folk-lore will pass with the passing of the Flathead Reservation, therefore it is well to stop and listen before the light is quite vanished from the hill-tops, while still the streams sing the songs of old and the trees murmur regretfully of things lost forever and a time that will come no more. We of the workaday world are too prone to believe that our own country is lacking in myth and tradition, in hero-tale and romance; yet here in our midst is a legended region where every landmark is a symbol in the

great, natural record book of a folk whose day is done and whose song is but an echo.

It would not be fitting to close these few introductory words without grateful acknowledgment to those who have aided me toward the accomplishment of my purpose. Indeed, every page brings a pleasant recollection of a friendly spirit and a helping hand. Mr. Duncan McDonald, son of Angus, and Mr. Henri Matt, my Indian friends, have told me by word of mouth, many of the myths and chronicles set forth in the following chapters. Mr. Edward Morgan, the faithful and just agent at the Flathead Reservation, has given me priceless information which I could never have obtained save through his kindly interest. He secured for me the legend of the Flint, the last tale told by Charlot and rendered into English by Michel Rivais, the blind interpreter who has served in that capacity for thirty years. Chief

Charlot died after this book was finished and he lies in the land of his exile, out of the home of his fathers where he had hoped to rest. From Mr. Morgan also I received the account of Charlot's meeting with Joseph at the LoLo Pass, the facts of which were given him by the little white boy since grown to manhood, Mr. David Whaley, who rode with Charlot and his band to the hostile camp.

The late Charles Aubrey, pioneer and plainsman, furnished me valuable data concerning the buffalo.

Madame Leonie De Mers and her hospitable relatives, the De Mers of Arlee, were instrumental in winning for me the confidence of the Selish people.

Mrs. L. Mabel Hight, the artist, who has caught the spirit of the mountains with her brush, has added to this book by making the peaks live again in their colours.

In conclusion I would express my everlasting gratitude to Mr. Thomas H.

Scott, of Lake McDonald, soldier, mountain-lover and woodsman, who, with unfailing courage and patience, has guided me safely over many and difficult trails.

For the benefit of students I must add that the authorities I have followed in my historical references are: Long's (James') *"Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, 1819-20,"* Maximilian's *"Travels in North America,"* Father De Smet's *"Oregon Missions,"* Major Ronan's *"History of the Flathead Indians,"* Bradbury's *"Travels,"* Father L. B. Palladino's *"Indian and White in the Northwest,"* and the *Reports* of the Bureau of Ethnology.

HELEN FITZGERALD SANDERS.

Butte, Montana,
April 5, 1910.

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THE GENTLE SELISH

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CHAPTER I

THE GENTLE SELISH

I

WHEN Lewis and Clark took their way through the Western wilderness in 1805, they came upon a fair valley, watered by pleasant streams, bounded by snowy mountain crests, and starred, in the Springtime, by a strangely beautiful flower with silvery-rose fringed petals called the Bitter Root, whence the valley took its name. In the mild enclosure of this land lived a gentle folk differing as much from the hostile people around them as the place of their nativity differed from the stern, mountainous country of long winters and lofty

altitudes surrounding it. These early adventurers, confusing this tribe with the nations dwelling about the mouth of the Columbia River, spoke of them as the Flatheads. It is one of those curious historical anomalies that the Chinooks who flattened the heads of their children, should never have been designated as Flatheads, while the Selish, among whom the practice was unknown, have borne the undeserved title until their own proper and euphonious name is unused and all but forgotten.

The Selish proper, living in the Bitter Root Valley, were one branch of a group composed of several nations collectively known as the Selish family. These kindred tribes were the Selish, or Flatheads, the Pend d'Oreilles, the Cœur d'Alenes, the Colvilles, the Spokanes and the Pisquouse. The Nez Percés of the Clearwater were also counted as tribal kin through inter-marriage.

Lewis and Clark were received with

great kindness and much wonder by the Selish. There was current among them a story of a hunting party that came back after a long absence East of the Rocky Mountains, bearing strange tidings of a pale-faced race whom they had met, —probably the adventurous Sieur de La Vérendrye and his cavaliers who set out from Montreal to find a highway to the Pacific Sea. But it was only a memory with a few, a curious legend to the many, and these men of white skin and blue eyes came to them as a revelation.

The traders who followed in the footsteps of the first trail-blazers found the natives at their pursuits of hunting, roving over the Bitter Root Valley and into the contested region east of the Main Range of the Rocky Mountains, where both they, and their enemies, the Blackfeet, claimed hereditary right to hunt the buffalo. They were at all times friendly to the white men who came among them, and these visitors described them as sim-

ple, straight-forward people, the women distinguished for their virtue, and the men for their bravery in the battle and the chase. They were cleanly in their habits and honorable in their dealings with each other. If a man lost his horse, his bow or other valuable, the one who found it delivered it to the Chief, or Great Father, and he caused it to be hung in a place where it might be seen by all. Then when the owner came seeking his goods, the Chief restored it to him. They were also charitable. If a man were hungry no one said him nay and he was welcome even at the board of the head men to share the best of their fare. This spirit of kindliness they extended to all save their foes and the prisoners taken in war whom they tortured after the manner of more hostile tribes. In appearance they were "comparatively very fair and their complexions a shade lighter than the palest new copper after being freshly rubbed." They were well formed,

lithe and tall, a characteristic that still prevails with the pure bloods, as does something of the detail of their ancient dress. They preserve the custom of handing down by word of mouth, from generation to generation, their myths, traditions and history. Some of these chronicles celebrate events which are estimated to have happened two hundred years or more ago.

Of the origin of the Selish nothing is known save the legend of their coming out of the mountains; and perhaps we are none the poorer, for no bald historical record of dates and migrations could be as suggestively charming as this story of the people, themselves, colored by their own fancy and reflecting their inner life. Indeed, a nation's history and tradition bear much the same relation to each other as the conventional public existence of a man compared with that intangible part of him which we call imagination, but which is in reality the sum-total of

his mental inheritance: the hidden treasure of his spiritual wealth. Let us look then, through the medium of the Indian's poetic imagery, into a past rose-hued with the sunrise of the new day.

Coyote, the hero of this legend, figures in many of the myths of the Selish; but they do not profess to know if he were a great brave bearing that name or if he were the animal itself, living in the legendary age when beasts and birds spoke the tongue of man. Likely he was a dual personality such as the white buffalo of numerous fables, who was at will a beautiful maiden or one among the vast herds of the plains. Possibly there was, indeed, such a mighty warrior in ages gone by about whose glorified memory has gathered the half-chimerical hero-tales which are the first step toward the ancestor-worship of primitive peoples. In all of the myths given here in which his name is mentioned, except that one of Coyote and the Flint, we shall consider him as an

Ideal embodying the Indians' highest conception of valor and achievement.

Long, long ago the Jocko was inhabited by a man-eating monster who lured the tribes from the hills into his domain and then sucked their blood. Coyote determined to deliver the people, so he challenged the monster to a mortal combat. The monster accepted the challenge, and Coyote went into the mountains and got the poison spider from the rocks and bade him sting his enemy, but even the venom of the spider could not penetrate the monster's hide.

Coyote took counsel of the Fox, his friend, and prepared himself for the fray. He got a stout leather thong and bound it around his body, then tied it fast to a huge pine tree. The monster appeared with dripping fangs and gaping jaws, approached Coyote, who retreated farther and farther away, until the thong stretched taut and the pine curved like a bow. Suddenly, the tree,

strained to its utmost limit, sprang back, felling the monster with a mortal stroke. Coyote was triumphant and the Woodpecker of the forest cut the pine and sharpened its trunk to a point which Coyote drove through the dead monster's breast, impaling it to the earth. Thus, the Jocko was rid of the man-eater, and the Selish, fearing him no more, came down from the hills into the valley where they lived in plenty and content.

The following story of Coyote and the Flint is of exceptional interest because it is from the lips of the dying Charlot—Charlot the unbending, the silent Chieftain. No word of English ever profaned his tongue, so this myth, told in the impressive Selish language, was translated word for word by Michel Rivais, the blind interpreter at the Flathead Agency, who has served faithfully and well for a period of thirty years.

"In the old times the animals had tribes just like the Indians. The Coyote had

his tipi. He was hungry and had nothing to eat. He had bark to shoot his arrow with and the arrow did not go through the deer. He was that way a long time when he heard there was Flint coming on the road that gave a piece of flint to the Fox and he could shoot a deer and kill it, but the Coyote did not know that and used the bark. They did not give the Coyote anything. They only gave some to the Fox. Next day the Fox put a piece of meat on the end of a stick and took it to the fire. The Fox had the piece of meat cooking there and the Coyote was looking at the meat and when it was cooked the Coyote jumped and got the piece of meat and took a bite and in it was the flint, and he bit the flint and asked why they did not tell him how to kill a deer with flint.

" 'Why didn't you tell me?' the Coyote asked his friend, the Fox. 'When did the Flint go by here?'

"The Fox said three days it went by here.

"The Coyote took his blanket and his things and started after the Flint and kept on his track all day and evening and said, 'Here is where the Flint camped,' and he stayed there all night himself, and next day he travelled to where the Flint camped, and he said, 'Here is where the Flint camped last night,' and he stayed there, and the next day he went farther and found where the Flint camped and he said, 'The Flint started from here this morning.' He followed the track next morning and went not very far, and he saw the Flint going on the road, and he went 'way out that way and went ahead of the Flint and stayed there for the Flint to come. When the Flint met him there the Coyote told him:

" 'Come here. Now, I want to have a fight with you today.'

"And the Flint said:

" 'Come on. We will fight.'

"The Flint went to him and the Coyote took the thing he had in his hand and struck him three or four times and the Flint broke all to pieces and the Coyote had his blanket there and put the pieces in the blanket and after they were through fighting and he had the pieces of flint in his blanket he packed the flint on his back and went to all the tribes and gave them some flint and said:

" 'Here is some flint for you to kill deer and things with.'

"And he went to another tribe and did the same thing and to other tribes and did the same until he came to Flint Creek and then from that time they used the flint to put in their arrows and kill deer and elk.

"That is the story of the Flint."

Coyote was the chosen one to whom the Great Spirit revealed the disaster which reduced the Selish from goodly multitudes of warriors to a handful of

wretched, plague-stricken invalids. Old women are still fond of relating the story which they received from their mothers and their mothers' mothers even to the third and fourth generation.

Coyote laid down to rest and dreamed that the Voice of the Great Spirit sounded in his ears, saying that unless the daughter of the Chief became his bride a scourge would fall upon the people. When morning broke he sought out the Chief and told him of the words of the Voice, but the Chief, who was a haughty man, would not heed Coyote and coldly denied him the hand of his daughter in marriage.

Coyote returned to his lodge and soon there resounded through the forests the piercing cry of one in distress. Coyote rushed forth and beheld a man covered with sores across the river. This man related to Coyote how he was the last survivor of a war party that had come upon a village once occupied by the enemy

whom they sought, but as they approached they saw no smoke arising from the tipis and no sign of life. They came forward very cautiously, but all was silent and deserted. From lodge to lodge they passed, and finally they came upon an old woman, pitted and scabbed, lying alone and dying. With her last breath she told them of a scourge which had fallen upon the village, consuming brave and child alike, until she, of all the lodges, was left to mourn the rest. Then one by one the war party which had ridden so gallantly to conquest and glory, felt an awful heat as of fire run through their veins. Burning and distraught they leaped into the cold waters of a river and died.

Such was the story of the man whom Coyote met in the woods. He alone remained, disfigured, diseased, doomed. So Coyote brought him into the village and quenched his thirst that he might pass more easily to the Happy Hunting

Ground. But as the Great Spirit had revealed to Coyote while he slept, the scourge fell upon the people and laid them low, scarcely enough grief-stricken survivors remaining to weep for their lost dead.

Besides this legendary narrative of the visitation of smallpox there are other authenticated instances of the plague wreaking its vengeance upon the Selish and depleting their villages to desolation. In this wise the tribe was thinned again and again and as early as 1813, Mr. Cox of the Northwest Fur Company, told in his "Adventures" that once the Selish were more powerful by far in number than in the day of his coming amongst them.

There was also another cause for the nation's decline quite as destructive as the plague;—the unequal hostility continuing generation after generation, without capitulation or truce, with the Blackfeet.

The country of the Selish abounded in game but it was a part of the tribal code of honour to hunt the buffalo in the fields where their ancestors had hunted. All of the deadly animosity between the two peoples, all of the bloodshed of their cruel wars, was for no other purpose than to maintain the right to seek the beloved herds in the favoured fields which they believed their forefathers had won. The jealousy with which this privilege of the chase was guarded and preserved even to the death explains many national peculiarities, forms, indeed, the keynote to their life of freedom on the plains.

It is possible that the Selish would have been annihilated had not the establishment of new trading-posts enabled them to get fire-arms which the Blackfeet had long possessed. This means of defence gave them fresh strength and thereafter the odds against them were not as great.

The annals of the tribe, so full of tragedy and joy, of fact and fancy, of folk-

lore and wood-lore, contain many stories of war glory reminiscent of the days of struggle. Even now there stands, near Ravalli in the Jocko, a rock resembling a man, called by the Indians the Stone Sentinel, which touchingly attests the fidelity and bravery of a nameless hero. The story is that one of the runners who had gone in advance of a war-party after the Indian custom, was surprised while keeping watch and killed by the Blackfeet. The body remained erect and was turned to stone, a monument of devotion to duty so strong that not even death could break his everlasting vigil.

Notwithstanding their love of glory on the war-path and hunting-field, they were a peaceable people. The most beautiful of their traditions are based upon religious themes out of which grew a poetical symbolism, half devotional, half fantastic. And even to-day, in spite of their profession of Christianity, there lives in the heart of the Indian the old

paganism, not unlike that of the Greeks, which spiritualizes every object of the woods and waters.

They thought that in the Beginning the good Spirit came up out of the East and the Evil Spirit out of the West, and then began the struggle, typified by light and darkness, which has gone on ever since. From this central idea they have drawn the rainbow Spirit-fancy which arches their dream-sky from horizon to horizon. They consider some trees and rocks sacred; again they hold a lake or stream in superstitious dread and shun it as a habitation of the evil one.

Thus, a cave in the neighbouring hills where rattlesnakes sleep in Winter, they avoided in the past, not on account of the common snakes, but because within the damp, dark recesses of that subterranean den, the King of Snakes, a huge, horned reptile dwelt, appearing occasionally in all his venomous, scaled beauty, striking terror wherever he was seen. A clear

spring bubbled near the cave but not even the cold purity of the water could tempt the Indians to that accursed vicinity until by some revelation they learned that the King Snake had migrated to other fastnesses. He is still seen, so they say, gliding stealthily amongst deserted wastes, his crest reared evily, and death in his poison tail.

In contrast to this cave of darkness is the spiritual legend of the Sacred Pine. Upon those same gentle hills of the Jocko it grows, lifting its lessening cone of green toward heaven. It has been there past the memory of the great-grand-fathers of the present generation and from time immemorial it has been held sacred by the Selish tribe. High upon its venerable branches hangs the horn of a Bighorn Sheep, fixed there so firmly by an unknown hand, before even the tradition of the Selish had shaped its ghostly form out of the mists of the past, that the blizzard has not been strong enough to wrench it

from its place, nor the frost to gnaw it away. No one knows whence the ram's horn came nor what it signifies, but the tree is considered holy and the Indians believe that it possesses supernatural powers. Hence, offerings are made to it of moccasins, beads, weasel skins, and such little treasures of wearing apparel or handiwork as they most esteem, and at certain seasons, beneath the cool, sweet shadow of its generous boughs the devoted worshippers, going back through the little superficialities of recent civilization to the magnetic pole of their own true blood and beliefs, assemble to dance with religious fervor around its base upon the green. The missionary fathers discourage such idolatrous practices; but the poor children of the woods play truant, nevertheless, and wander back through the cycle of the centuries to do honour to the old, sweet object of their devotion in the primitive, pagan way. And surely the Great Spirit who

watches over white and red man impartially, can scarcely be jealous of this tribute of love to a tree,—the instinctive, race-old festival of a woodland tribe.

There is another pine near Ravalli revered because it recalls the days of the chase. It stands upon the face of a mountain somewhat apart from its brethren of the forest, and there the Bighorn Sheep used to take refuge when pursued. If driven to bay, the leader, followed by his band, leaped to death from this eminence. It is known as the Pine of the Bighorn Sheep.

Thus, it will be seen there lives among the Selish a symbolism, making objects which they love chapters in the great unwritten book, wherein is celebrated the heroic past. He who has the key to that volume of tribe-lore, may learn lessons of valour and achievement, of patience and sacrifice. And colouring the whole story, making beautiful its least phase, is the

sentiment of the people, even as the haze is the poetry of the hills.

II

As heroic or disastrous events are celebrated in verbal chronicles it follows that the home of the Selish is storied ground. Before the pressure of civilization, encroaching in ever-narrowing circles upon the hunting-ground of the Indians, cramping and crowding them within a smaller space, driving them inch by inch to the confinement which is their death, the Selish wandered at will over a stretch of country beautiful alike in the reality of its landscape and in the richness of myth and legend which hang over every peak and transfigure every lake and stream. To know this country and the people it has sheltered through past centuries one must first glean something of that ephemeral story-charm which records in crag, in mist, in singing stream

and spreading tree the dreams made almost real by the thousands of souls who have treasured them, and given them, lip to lip, from old to young, since the forests were first green upon the hills.

The land of the Selish extended eastward to that portion of the Main Range of the Rocky Mountains known to them as *Sin-yal-min,* or the "Mountains of the Surrounded," from the fact that once a hunting party surrounded and killed a herd of elk by a stream upon those heights; another time a war-party surrounded and slew a company of Blackfeet within the woods upon the mountain side. Though this range marked the eastern boundary of their territory, they hunted buffalo, as we have seen, still east of its mighty peaks,—a region made bloody by battles between the Selish and the Blackfeet tribes. Westward, they wandered over the fertile valley of Sin-yal-min, where they, in common with the Pend d'Oreilles, Kootanais and Nez

Percés enjoyed its fruits and fields of grain. This valley is bounded to the north by the great Flathead Lake, a body of water vast in its sweep, winding through narrow channels among wooded shores ever unfolding new and unexposed vistas as one traverses it. On a calm summer day, when the sun's rays are softened by gossamer veils of haze, the water, the mountain-peaks and sky are faintly traced in shades of grey and faded rose as in mother-of-pearl. And on such days as this, at rare intervals, a strange phenomenon occurs,—*the reflection of a reflection.* Looking over the rail of a steamer within the semi-circular curve of the swell at its stern, one may see, first the reflection of the shore line, the mountains and trees appearing upside down, then a second shore line perfectly wrought in the mirroring waters right side up, pine-crest touching pine-crest, peak poised against peak. This lake was the Selish's conception of the greatest of waters, for their wandering

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never took them to the Atlantic or Pacific Seas, and in such small craft as they used to travel over the forty miles of water among serpentining shores, the distance must have seemed immense. Many islands rise from the lake, the largest of them, Wild Horse Island, is timbered and mountainous, and so big as to appear like an arm of the main land. This Wild Horse Island, where in olden days bands of wild horses were found, possesses a peculiar interest. Upon its steep cliffs are hieroglyphics traced in pigments unknown to-day, telling the forgotten story of a lost race. The same strange figures appear upon the sheer escarpments of the mainland shore. These rock-walls are moss-grown and colored by the lichen, chrome yellow, burnt orange, russet-brown and varying shades of bronze-green like Autumn leaves, and upon them broods a shadow as darkly impenetrable as the mystery which they hold. Still, it is easy to distinguish upon the heroic tab-

lets of stone, crude figures of horses and some incomprehensible marks. These writings have been variously interpreted or guessed at. Some declare them to be ancient war signals of the Selish, others suggest that they were records of hunting parties left behind for the guidance and information of the tribe; but they, themselves, deny all knowledge of them, saying that to them as to us, the pictured rocks are a wonder and a riddle, the silent evidence of foot-falls so remote that not even an echo has come down to us through the centuries.

Such are the valley of Sin-yal-min and the Lake of the Flathead where the Selish hunted. But their real home, the seat of their fathers, was the Bitter Root Valley, where one branch of the tribe, headed by Charlot, the son of Victor, lived until the recent exodus. Therefore, the Bitter Root Valley was particularly dear to the hearts of these Indians. It was there the bond between the kindred

tribes, the Nez Percés and the Selish, was broken; there the pioneer Fathers came to build the first Mission and plant the first Cross among these docile children of the wood. It was there they clung together like frightened sheep until they were driven forth to seek new homes in the Valley of the Jocko, which was to be merely a station in their enforced retreat.

Eastward and southward from the Bitter Root, the Jocko and the range of Sin-yal-min in the contested country, is a cañon called the Hell Gate, because within its narrow limits, the Blackfeet wreaked vengeance upon their less warlike foes. Flowing through the cañon is a river, *In-mis-sou-let-ka,* corrupted into Missoula, which bears one of the most beautiful of the Selish legends.

Coyote was taking his way through a pass in the mountains during the ancient days, when there came to him, out of the closed lip of silence, the echo of a sound.

He stopped to listen, in doubt if it were the singing of waters or human voices that he heard, and as he listened the echo grew into a reality and the strains of wondrous, weirdly sweet music greeted his ear. He followed the illusive melody, attracted as by magic, and at last he saw upon the flower-sown green a circle of young women, dancing around and around, hand clasped in hand, forming a chain and singing as they danced. They beckoned to Coyote and called unto him, saying:

"Thou art beautiful, O Warrior! and strong as is the sun. Come dance with us and we will sing to thee."

Coyote, like one who walks in his sleep, obeyed them and joined the enchanted circle. Then he perceived that as they danced and sang they drew him closer and closer to a great river that lashed itself into a blind, white fury of foam upon the rocks. Coyote became afraid like a woman. He noted with dread the water-

weed in the maidens' hair and the evil beauty of their eyes. He strove to break away but he was powerless to resist them and he felt himself drawn nearer and nearer the roaring torrent, until at last the waters closed over him in whirlpools and he knew no more.

The Fox, who was wise and crafty, passed along the shore and there he found, among the water-weeds and grasses the lifeless body of Coyote which had been cast up by the waters, even as they had engulfed him. The Fox was grieved for he loved Coyote, so he bent over the corpse and brought it back to life. Coyote opened his eyes and saw his friend, but the chill of the water was in his blood and he was numb. Then above the roar of the river, echoed the magical measure of a weird-sweet song and through a green glade came the dancers who had lured Coyote to his death. He rose at the sound of the bewitching

melody and strained forward to listen.

"It was they who led me to the river," he cried.

"Aye, truly. They are the water Sirens and thou must destroy them," replied the Fox.

At those words Coyote's heart became inflamed with ire; he grew strong with purpose and crept forward, noiseless as a snake, unobserved by the water-maidens.

They were dancing like a flock of white butterflies upon a stretch of grass yellowed and seared by the heat of the sun. Swiftly and silently Coyote set fire to the grass, imprisoning them in a ring of flame. They saw the wall of fire leap up around them and their singing was changed to cries. They turned hither and thither and sought to fly to the water but the way was barred by the hot red-gold embrace of the fire.

When the flames had passed, Coyote went to the spot where the Sirens had

danced, and there upon the blackened ground he found a heap of great, white shells. He took these, the remains of the water-maidens, and cast them into the river, saying as he did so:

"I call thee *In-mis-sou-let-ka* and thou shalt forever bear that name!"

Thus it was that the river flowing through the Hell Gate came by the title of In-mis-sou-let-ka, which men render into English by the inadequate words of "*The River of Awe.*"

Through the length and breadth of the country are story-bearing land-marks. There is a rock in the Jocko, small of size but of weight so mighty that no Indian, however strong, can move it; there is a mountain which roars and growls like an angry monster; there is a cliff where a brave of the legendary age of heroes battled hand to hand with a grizzly bear, and a thousand other spots, each hallowed by a memory. So, through peak

and lowland, rivers and forests one can find the faery-spell of romance, lending the commonest stone individuality and interest. And the most prosaic pilgrim wandering along haunted streams, cooling in the shadow of storied woods and upon the shores of enchanted lakes, must feel the spell of poesy upon him; must look with altered vision upon the whispering trees, listen with quickened hearing to the articulate murmur of the rivers, knowing for a time at least, the subtle fellowship with the woodland which is in the heart of the Indian.

Such is the legended land of the Selish, a land fit for gentle, poetic folk to dwell in, a land worthy for brave and devoted men to lay down their lives to save.

III

Within the Bitter Root Valley dwelt Charlot, *Slem-Hak-Kah,* "Little Claw of a Grizzly Bear," son of the great

chief Victor, "The Lodge Pole," and therefore by hereditary right Head Chief of the Selish tribe. That valley is perhaps the most favoured land of the region. The snow melts earlier within its mountain-bound heart, the blizzard drives less fiercely over its slopes and the Spring comes there sooner, sprinkling the grass with the rose stars of the Bitter Root. Under the guidance of the missionary fathers the Indians learned to till the soil and the bounty of their toil was sufficient, for the rich earth yielded fine crops of grain and fruit. The Indians who sowed and plowed their small garden-spots, and the kindly fathers who watched over their prosperity, little dreamed that in the free gift of the earth and the mild beauty of the land lay the cause which should wreak the red man's ruin. This land was dear to the hearts of the people. Victor, their brave guardian, had saved it for them at the treaty of the Hell Gate when they were

called upon to give up part of their territory to the increasing demands of the whites. Those of the dominant race kept coming into the Bitter Root and they were welcomed by the Indians. Thus, bit by bit the valley was taken up, its fame spread and it became a region so desirable that the government determined to move the Selish tribe out of the land of their fathers.

Charlot was a courageous and honest man, a leader worthy of his trust. It was he who met the Nez Percés as they descended into the Bitter Root, headed by Chief Joseph, hot with the lust for the white man's scalp. There are few more dramatic incidents in western history than Charlot's visit to Chief Joseph on the Lo-Lo trail and the ultimatum which he delivered to the leader of the Nez Percé hosts.

He rode forth accompanied by Joe La Mousse and a small war-party, carrying with him a little white boy. About his

arm he had tied a snowy handkerchief in token of the peaceful character of his errand. When the two Chiefs, Charlot and Joseph faced each other, Charlot spoke these words, slowly, defiantly as one who has made a great decision:

"Joseph, I have something to say to you. It will be in a few words.

"You know I am not afraid of you.

"You know I can whip you.

"If you are going through the valley you must not hurt any of the whites. If you do you will have me and my people to fight.

"You may camp at my place to-night but to-morrow you must pass on."

And it was as Charlot decreed. Joseph the brave, intractable warrior who did battle with the army of the United States and kept the cleverest of our generals guessing at his strategies, bent to the iron will of Charlot. The Nez Percés passed peacefully through the valley and never a soul was harmed.

In the long, cruel struggle that followed, when Chief Joseph and his braves struck terror to the settlers, leaving death and ruin in their path, Charlot remained staunch and true. Indeed, the boast of the Selish is that they, as a nation, were never guilty of taking a white man's life.

Meantime, while they lived in peace and plenty, the fates had sealed their doom. There is no use reiterating the long, painful story of the treaty between the Selish and the government, ceding to the latter the land where the tribal ancestors lived and died. Charlot declared he did not sign away the birth-right of his people and he was an honourable man. He and his friends went farther and said that his mark was forged. On the other hand some of those who were witnesses for the United States maintain that the name Charlot was written like that of Arlee and others, with a blank space left for the mark, or signature of each Chief. They further state that Charlot never af-

fixed his mark to the document nor was it forged as he asserted to the end. This is at best mere evasion. One of two things happened: a fraudulent signature was put upon the face of the treaty to deceive the government, or Charlot, as Head Chief, was overridden and ignored. Whatever the means employed the outcome was the same. It was an unhappy day for the Indians. They had no recourse but to submit, so most of them headed by Arlee, the War Chief, struck their tipis, abandoned the toil-won fields where they had laboured so long and so patiently, left the shadow of the Cross where they were baptized, and went forth into the Jocko to begin again the struggle which should never be more than a beginning.

But Charlot the royal-blooded, son of a long line of fighting chiefs, was not to be moved by the master-hand like a pawn in a game of chess. He haughtily refused to leave the Bitter Root Valley, telling his

Joe La Mousse

people that those of them who wished to go should follow Arlee, but he with a few of the faithful, would lie down to his repose in the land of his fathers beneath peaks that mingle with the sky. With impassive dignity he and a party of his loyal band went to Washington at the bidding of the Great Father to listen to the justice of the white man's claim. Charlot proudly declined to accept pension and authority bought at the price of his exile. He wished only the "poor privilege" of dwelling in the valley where his fathers had dwelt; of resting at last, where they had lain so long. He wanted neither money nor land,—simply permission to live in the home of his childhood, his manhood and old age. He added that he would never be taken alive to the Jocko Reservation. The Powers saw no merit in the sentiment of the old Chief. He had dared to oppose their will and they determined to break his spirit. He might remain in the Bitter Root the All-Wise

decreed, but in remaining he relinquished every right. More crushing to him than poverty and exile was the final blow to his pride. In a sense he was King of his tribe. The title of Great Chief descended from father to son, even as the crowns of empires are handed down. The War Chiefs, on the other hand, were elected to command the warriors for a year and at the end of their service they became simple braves again. The government, ignoring the canons of the Selish, put Charlot aside, and Arlee, the Red Night, last of the War Chiefs, took precedence over him and became Head Chief of his nation. Charlot was stripped of his title, his honours, his privileges of land grant and pension; in other words, he was reduced from Great Chief to pauper.

Thus Charlot, who with his braves had defied his kinsfolk, the Nez Percés, to protect the weak colony of settlers in their Bitter Root home was driven forth by these same strangers within his gates,

and he, the bravest and best of his kind, shorn of the dignities his forebears and he, himself, had won;—robbed, cast out, was held up to contumely as an unruly savage and spurned by the people his mercy had spared.

From the Bitter Root, the poor wanderers took their way into the Jocko, a region also fair, where some of their tribe already dwelt, and made for themselves new homes. They accepted the change uncomplainingly and set to work to sow and reap in this adopted land.

Charlot and his band of nearly two hundred lingered in the Bitter Root until 1891, when driven by hunger and suffering they followed their tribesmen into the Jocko. He had said he would never be *taken alive* to the new reservation, nor was he. Clad in his war dress, mounted on his best horse, surrounded by his young men in full war regalia, he rode into exile, proud, unbending as a triumphant Chief entering dominions won by conquest. No

expression of pain crossed his bronzestern face; no hint of humility or subjection softened the majesty of his mien. He and his braves were met by the Selish who had gone before, with great ostentation and ceremony. Charlot never forgot nor forgave. He had been cast out, betrayed, but not conquered.

The Selish have learned to love the soft, yellow-green of the Jocko hills, the free sweep of its prairies, where sun flowers flow in a sea of gold beneath the rushing tide of the summer wind, and the prettily boisterous little Jocko River laughs and plays over its rocky bed between a veritable jungle of trees and vines and flowers. In these woods bordering the stream, the most luscious wild gooseberries, strawberries and bright scarlet brew berries grow—this last, dear to the Indian, is picked by the squaws and made into a sparkling draught. There the trees are hung with dense tapestries of blossoming vines, thick moss deadens the foot-

step and birds call shrilly from the twilight of the trees. But the Jocko and Sinyal-min are beautiful and fertile, and wherever there is beauty and fertility there comes the Master saying:

"This is mine by right of might! Go forth again O Indian! There are lean hills and deserts left for thee!"

And the Indian, grown used to such things, folds his tipi and takes his way into the charity of the lessening wilderness.

Not long ago a strange thing came to pass. One evening the sun set in a passion of red and gold. The tide of light pulsed through the skies, the air throbbed and shimmered with it, and every lake and pool reflected its ruddy splendour until they seemed to be filled with blood. The Indians gazed at the spectacle in silent awe. Groups of them on horseback, dark figures silhouetted against the bright sky, stared curiously at the awful glory of the heavens and earth, whispered in low tones

together and were afraid. Was the Great Spirit revealing something to his children? Some there were who thought that the crimson banners in the West foretold a disaster and verily it was true. The end was near. The sun was setting forever upon their freedom. Once more the children of the old time would be driven to another camping ground where they might halt for a little space and rest their weary heads before they take up the march upon their endless retreat.

IV

During the Summer at the time when the sun reached his greatest strength, according to the ancient custom, the Selish gathered together to dance. In this celebration is embodied the spirit of the people, their pride, their hates and loves. But this dance had a peculiar significance. It was, perhaps, the last that the tribe will celebrate. Another

year the white man will occupy the land, and the free, roving life and its habits will be gone. It was a scene never to be forgotten. Overhead a sky deeply azure at its zenith which mellowed toward the West into a tide of ruddy gold flowing between the blue heavens and the green earth; far, far away, dim, amethyst mountains dreaming in the haze; and through that rose-gold flood of light, sharply outlined against the intense blue above and the tender green below, silent figures on horseback, gay with blankets, beads and buckskins, rode out of the filmy distance into the splendour of the setting sun, and noiselessly took their places around the musicians on the grass.

There were among them the most distinguished men of the tribe. Joe La Mousse, once a warrior of fame, grown to an honored old age, watched the younger generation with the simple dignity which becomes one of his years and rank. He possessed the richest war dress of all,

strung with elks' teeth and resplendent with the feathers of the war-eagle. It was he, who with Charlot, met the Nez Percés and repudiated their bloody campaign; he, whose valiant ancestor, Ignace La Mousse, the Iroquois, helped to make glorious the name of his adopted people. *François* and *Kai-Kai-She,* the judge, both honoured patriarchs, and Chief Antoine Moise, *Callup-Squal-She,* "Crane with a ring around his neck," who followed Charlot to Washington on his mission of protest, moved and mingled in the bright patchwork of groups upon the green. There was none more imbued with the spirit of festivity than old François with white hair falling to his bowed shoulders. These and many more there were whose prime had known happier days. Chief Moise's wife, a handsome squaw, rode in with her lord, and conspicuous among the women was a slim wisp of a girl with an oval face, buckskin-colored complexion, and great, dusky,

twilight eyes. A pale gray-green blanket was wrapped about her head and body, hanging to her moccasined feet. She was the wife of Michel Kaiser, the young leader of the braves. But towering above the rest of the assembly, regal to the point of austerity, was a man aged but still erect, as though his strength of pride would never let his shoulders stoop beneath the conquering years. He wore his blanket folded closely around him and fanned himself with an eagle's wing, the emblem of the warrior. One eye was hidden beneath a white film which had shut out its sight forever, but the other, coal-black and piercing, met the stranger gaze for gaze, never flinching, never turning aside. It was Charlot. Though an exile, his head was still unbent, his spirit unbroken.

Sometimes we see in the aged, the placid melancholy which comes with the foreknowledge of death, so in the serenely sad faces of the aged Indians, we rec-

ognize that greater melancholy which is born of the foreshadowing of racial death. They cherish, too, a more personal grief in that they shall live to see the passing of the old life. Patiently they submitted to the expulsion from the Bitter Root, but now in the darkness of gathering years once more they must strike their tipis to make room for the invading hosts. The setting sun streamed through the leaves and touched the venerable faces with false youth. Wagon and pony discharged their human loads who sat passively, listening to the admonition of the tom-tom and the chant:

"Come, O! ye people! Come and dance!"

After this preliminary measure had lasted hours, not an Indian professed to know whether the people would be moved to dance or not. A race characteristic is that impulse must quicken them to action. It was strange how the tidings had spread. The tipis and lodges are scattered over many miles, but the In-

dians kept coming as though called up by magic from their hiding places in the hills.

Beneath a clump of cottonwood trees around the tom-tom, a drum made of deer hide stretched over a hollowed section of green tree, sat the four musicians beating the time of the chant with sticks bound in strips of cloth. Of these players one was blind, another aged, and the remaining two, in holiday attire, with painted lips and cheeks, were braves. One of these, seated a trifle higher than his companions, leaned indolently over the tom-tom plying his sticks with careless grace. He possessed a peculiar magnetism which marked him a leader. Occasionally his whole body thrilled with sudden animation, his voice rose into a strident cry, then he relapsed into the languid posture and the bee-like drone. Of all that gathering he was the one perfect, full-blood specimen of a brave in the height of his prime. The dandy, Victor Vanderberg,

was handsomer perhaps, and little Jerome had the beauty of a head of Raphael, but this Michel Kaiser was a type apart. His face and slim, nimble hands were the colour of bronze. His nose curved sharply as a hawk's beak, his mouth was compressed in a hard, cold line over his white teeth, his cheek bones were high and prominent, his brows straight, sable strokes above small, bright-black eyes that gleamed keen as arrow darts. His hair was made into two thick braids wrapped around with brown fur, his arms were decorated with bracelets and from his neck hung string upon string of beads falling to his waist. It was he who with suppressed energy flung back his head as he gave the shrill cry and quickened the beat of the tom-tom until louder and louder, faster and faster swelled the chant:

"Come, O! ye people! Come and dance!"

Then out into the open on the green stepped a girl-child scarcely three years

of age, who threw herself into rhythmic motion, swaying her small body to the time of the music and bearing in her quavering treble the burden of the chant. The impressive faces of the spectators melted into smiles. She was the pet of the tribe, the orphan granddaughter of Joe La Mousse and his venerable wife. Loving hands had made for her a war dress which she wore with the grave complaisance of one favoured above her peers. She scorned the sedate dances of the squaws and chose the quicker action of the war dance, and she would not yield her possession of the field without a struggle which showed that the spirit of her fighting fathers still lived in her.

Suddenly a brave painted grotesquely, dressed in splendid colours with a curious contrivance fastened about his waist and standing out behind like a tail, bounded into the ring, his hurrying feet beating to the tintinnabulation of sleigh bells attached to his legs. Michel Kaiser and the

young man who sat beside him at the tom-tom gave up their places to others, and after disappearing for a moment came forth freed from encumbering blankets, transformed with paint and ornament. A fourth dancer joined them and the awe-begetting war dance began. The movement was one of restrained force. With bent heads and bodies inclined forward, one arm hanging limp and the other resting easily at the back, they tripped along until a war-whoop like an electric shock, sent them springing into the air with faces turned upward and clenched fists uplifted toward the sky.

It was now that Michel stood revealed in all his physical beauty. In colour and form he was like a perfectly wrought bronze statue. He was tall and slender. His arms and legs, metal-hard, were fleet and strong and his every motion expressed agility and grace. He was clad in the full war-dress of the Selish, somewhat the same as that which his ancestors had worn

before the coming of the white man. Upon his head was a bonnet of skunk tails that quivered with the slightest motion of his sinewy body. He wore, besides, a shirt, long, fringed buckskin leggins and beaded moccasins. He was decorated with broad anklets and little bells that tinkled as he moved. Of the four dancers Michel sprang highest, swung in most perfect rhythm, spent in that wild carnival most energy and force. Supple and lean as a panther he curvetted and darted; light as the wind his moccasined feet skimmed over the green, scarcely seeming to crush a spear of grass. As he went through that terrible pantomime practiced by his fathers before they set out to kill or die, the fire flashing in his lynx-eyes, his slim arm poised over his head, his whole willow-lithe body swaying to the impulse of the war-lust, it was easy to fancy how that play might become a reality and he who danced to perpetuate an ancient form might turn re-

lentless demon if the intoxication of the war-path once kindled in his veins.

This war dance explained many things. It was a portrayal of the glorious deeds of the warriors, a recitation of victorious achievement, a picture of battle, of striking the body of the fallen enemy—one of the great tests of valor. The act of striking was considered a far more gallant feat than the taking of a scalp. After a foe was shot and had fallen, a brave seeking distinction, dashed forth from his own band into the open field and under the deadly rain of the enemy's arrows, struck with his hand the body of the dead or wounded warrior. In doing this he not only courted the desperate danger of that present moment, but brought upon his head the relentless vengeance of the family, the followers and the tribe of the fallen foe,—vengeance of a kind that can wait for years without growing cold. By such inspiring examples the young men were stirred to emulation. The dance

Abraham Isaac and Michel Kaiser

showed, too, how in the past the storm-clouds of war gathered slowly until, with lightning flash and thunder-blast, the warriors lashed themselves to the white-heat of frenzy at which they mocked death. The whole thing seemed to be a marshalling of the passions, a blood-fire as irresistible and sweeping as those floods of flame which lay the forests low.

The warriors ceased their mad career. The sweat streamed from their brows and down their cheeks as they sat beneath the shade trees in repose. Still the tom-tom beat and the chant continued:

"Come, O! ye people! Come and dance!"

They needed no urging now. What did they care for vespers and sermons when the ghostly voices of warrior-ancestors, of forest dwellers and hunstmen came echoing from the lips of the past? Their spirit was aroused and the festival would last until the passion was quenched and their veins were cooled.

The next dance was started by a squaw.

It was called the "choosing dance," from the fact that either a man or a woman chose a partner for the figure. The ceremony of invitation was simple. The one who desired to invite another, grasped the individual's arm and said briefly:

"Dance!"

The couples formed two circles around the tom-tom, one within the other, then slowly the two rings moved 'round and 'round, with a kind of short, springing step, droning the never-varying chant. At the end of the dance the one who had chosen his partner presented him with a gift. In some cases a horse or a cow was bestowed and not infrequently blankets and the most cherished bead-work belts and hat-bands. Custom makes the acceptance of these favours compulsory. Even the alien visitors were asked to take part and the Indians laughed like pleased children to welcome them to the dance. One very old squaw, Mrs. "Nine Pipes," took her blanket from her body and her

'kerchief from her head to give to her white partner, and a brave, having chosen a pale-faced lady for the figure, and being depleted in fortune by his generosity at a former festival, borrowed fifty cents from a richer companion to bestow upon her. It was all done in the best of faith and friendliness, with child-like good will and pleasure in the doing.

When the next number was called, those who had been honoured with invitations and gifts returned the compliment. After this was done, the Master of the Dance, Michel Kaiser, stepped into the center of the circle, saying in the deep gutturals of the Selish tongue, with all the pomp of one who makes a proclamation, something which may be broadly rendered into these English words:

"This brave, Jerome, chose for his partner, Mary, and gave to her a belt of beads, and Mary chose for her partner, Jerome, and gave to him a silken scarf."

Around the circumference of the great

ring he moved, crying aloud the names of the braves and maids who had joined together in the dance, and holding up to view the presents they had exchanged.

The next in order was a dance of the chase by the four young men who had performed the war dance. In this the hunter and the beast he pursued were impersonated and the pantomime carried out every detail of the fleeing prey and the crafty huntsmen who relentlessly drove him to earth.

The fourth measure was the scalp dance given by the squaws, a rite anciently practiced by the female members of families whose lords had returned victorious from battle, bearing as trophies the scalps of enemies they had slain. It was considered an indignity and a matter of just reproach to her husband or brother, if a squaw were unable to take part in this dance. The scalps captured in war were first displayed outside the lodges of the warriors whose spoil they were, and

after a time, when they began to mortify or "break down," as the Indians say, the triumphant squaws gathered them together, threw them into the dust and stamped on them, heaping upon them every insult and in the weird ceremony of that ghoulish dance, consigning them to eternal darkness, for no brave without his scalp could enter the Happy Hunting Ground. The chant changed in this figure. The voices of the women rose in a piercing falsetto, broken by a rapid utterance of the single syllable "la, la" repeated an incredible length of time. The effect was singularly savage and strange, emphasizing the barbarous joy of the vengeful women. As the war dance was the call to battle, this was the aftermath.

In pleasing contrast to this cruel rite was the marriage dance, celebrated by both belles and braves. The young squaws, in their gayest attire, ornamented with the best samples of their bead work and painted bright vermillion about the

lips and cheeks, formed a chain around the tom-tom, singing shrilly. Then a brave with a party of his friends stepped within the circle, bearing in his hand a stick, generally a small branch of pine or other native tree. He approached the object of his love and laid the branch on her shoulder. If she rejected his suit she pushed the branch aside and he, with his followers, retired in humiliation and chagrin. It often happened that more than one youth desired the hand of the same maiden, and the place of the rejected lover was taken immediately by a rival who made his prayer. If the maid looked with favor upon him she inclined her head, laying her cheek upon the branch. This was at once the betrothal and the marriage. At the close of the festivities the lover bore her to his lodge and they were considered man and wife.

The sun set mellow rose behind the hills which swam in seas of deepening

blue. Twilight unfolded shadows that climbed from the valleys to the peaks and touched them with deadening gray chill, until the warm glow died in the bosom of the night. Still the tom-tom beat, the chant rose and fell, the dancers wheeled on madly, singing as they danced. The darkness thickened. The stars wrote midnight in the sky. Papooses had fallen asleep and women sat mute and tired with watching. By the flare of a camp fire, running in uneven lights over the hurrying figures, one might see four braves leaping and swaying in the war dance. The night wore on. A heavy silence was upon the hills which echoed back the war cry, the tom-tom's throb and the chant. One, then another, then a third dropped out. Still the quivering, sweat-burnished bronze body of Michel writhed and twisted, bent and sprang. The lines of his face had hardened, the vermillion ran down his cheeks in rivulets, as of blood, and the corners of his

mouth were drawn like the curves of a bow. The camp fire glowed low. The gray of the dawn came up out of the East with a little shuddering wind and the faint stars burned out. The tom-tom pulsed slower, the chant was broken. Suddenly a wild cry thrilled through the pallid morn. The figure of Michel darted upward like a rocket in a final brilliant gush of life, then fell senseless upon the ground.

The embers grayed to ashes. The last spark was dead. The dance was done. The mists of morning rolled up from the valleys and unfurled their pale shrouds along the peaks, and the Indians, mere shadow-shapes, like phantoms in a dream, stole silently away and vanished with the night.

ENCHANTED WATERS

CHAPTER II

ENCHANTED WATERS

I

THERE is a lake in the cloistered fastnesses of Sin-yal-min, named by the Jesuit priests St. Mary's, but called by the Indians the Waters of the Forgiven. It is a small body of water overshadowed by abrupt mountains, fed by a beautiful fall and for some reason, impossible to explain, it is haunted by an atmosphere at once ghostly and sad. So potent is this intangible dread, this fear of something unseen, this melancholy begotten of a cause unknown, that every visitor is conscious of it. Most of all, the Indians, impressionable and fanciful as children, feel the weird spell and cherish a legend of it as nebulous as the

mists that flutter in pale wraith-shapes across its enchanted depths.

The story goes that once, long ago, someone was killed upon the lake and the troubled spirit returns to haunt the scene of its mortal passing, but the murderer, smitten with remorse and repenting of his crime was finally forgiven by the Great Spirit, and the lake became known as the Waters of the Forgiven. The shadow of that crime has never lifted and it broods forever over the lake's dark face and upon the mountains that hold it in their cup of stone. There the echo is multiplied. If one calls aloud, a chorus of fantastic, mocking voices takes up the sound and it goes crying through the solitude like lost souls in Purgatory. The Waters of the Forgiven exhale their eternal sigh, their pensive gloom, even when the sun rides high in the blue, but to feel the fullness of its spectral melancholy, one must seek it out in the secrecy of night. Then, as the mellow moon rises over the

mountain tops laying the pale fingers of its rays suggestively on rock and tree, touching them with magical illusion and transforming them to goblin shapes, one palpitates with strange fear, is impressed with impending disaster. As the moonlight flows in misty streams, sealing ravine and lake-deep in shadow the more intense for the contrast of white, discriminating light that runs quicksilver-like upon the ripples of the water and the quivering needles of the pine, the silence is broken by dismal howls. It is the lean, gray timber wolves. Their mournful cry is flung back again by the ghostly pack that no eye sees and no foot can track. Mountain lions yell shrilly and are answered by distant ones of their kind and inevitably that other lesser cry comes back again and again as though the phantom chorus could never forget nor leave off the burden of that lament. Out of the pregnant darkness into the spectral moonlight shadowy creatures come to the shore

to drink. The deer, the bear, sometimes the mountain lion and the elk stalk forth and quench their thirst. These things are strange enough, savage enough to inspire fear, but it is not they, nor the grisly mountains that create the terror which is a phantasm, the dread which is not of flesh nor earth.

No Indian, however brave, pitches his tipi by this lake nor crosses its waters, for among the tangle of weeds in its black, mysterious bosom, water sirens are believed to dwell. Ever watchful of human prey they gaze upward from their mossy couches and if a boatman venture out in his frail canoe, they rise, entwining their strangling, white arms about him, pressing him with kisses poisonous as the serpent's sting, breathing upon him their blighting, deadly-sweet breath that dulls his senses into the oblivion of eternal sleep.

II

The Jocko or Spotted Lakes are enchanted waters also. They lie high up in the crown of the continent—the main range of the Rocky Mountains. To reach them the traveller needs patience and strength of body and soul, for the trail is long and tortuous, winding along the rim of sickening-steep ravines, across treacherous swamps, amid mighty forests to great altitudes. There are three lakes in this group, one above the other, the last being sometimes called the Clearwater Lake because it is within the borders of that terrible wilderness whose savage fastnesses have claimed their prey of lost wanderers.

The first lake is inexpressibly ghostly. The flanks of the mountains rise sheer and frown down on murky waters, leaving scarcely any shore, and around their margin, gray-white drift-wood lies scattered like unburied bones. It is a spectral spot,

unearthly, colourless as a moth, preyed upon by a lamentable sadness which broods unbroken in the solitude. There the fox-fire kindles in the darkness, the owl wheels in his midnight flight and pale shades of mist unwind their shroud-like scarfs. It is a pool of the dead, a region of lost hopes and throttling despair.

From this lake the trail bears upward through dense jungles and morasses, venomously beautiful with huge, brilliantly coloured flowers growing to the height of a man. Their scarlet and yellow disks exhale an overpowering fragrance, insidious, almost narcotic in its strength. Beneath rank stalk and leaf, rearing blossom and entangling vine, creeping things with mortal sting dwell in the dank, sultry-sweet shadow. One is dazzled with the colour and the scent; charmed and repelled; tempted on into treacherous sinkholes by a wild extravagance of beauty too wanton to be good.

At length the second lake unfolds it-

self from the living screen of tree and wooded steep. A point of land, stained blood-red, juts out into the water and over it tumbles and cascades a foam-whitened fall. This stain of crimson is a thick-spun carpet of Indian Paint Brush interwoven with lush grass. The mountains show traces of orange and green, apparently a mineral wash hinting of undiscovered treasure.

Looking into the depths of the lake one is impressed with its freckled appearance. A blotch of milky white, then one of dull yellow mottles the water and even as one watches, a shadow darkens the surface, concentrating, scattering in kaleidoscopic variety, then disappearing as mysteriously as it came. There is no cloud in the sky, nor overhanging tree, nor passing bird to cause that shade without substance. At first it seems inexplicable and the Indians, finding no natural reason for its being, believe it to be the forms of water sirens gliding to and fro. On this account, here

as at the Waters of the Forgiven no Indian dares to come alone and even with human company he fears the sirens' spell. For as the victim sleeps they come, drawing closer and breathing his breath until he dies. If one watches patiently he may see that the dark shadows are made by shoals of fish, gathering and dispersing, and in so doing, accentuating and lessening the sable spots. The lake is as uneven in temperature as it is in colour. It has hot pools and icy shallows, so it is probably fed by springs as well as by the torrent which falls from the peaks. A strong, sulphurous odour taints the air; the water is unpleasant to the taste and the sedgy weeds which grow about the shores are stained. And as the waters recede during the summer heat, along the banks, in uneven streaks a mineral deposit traces their retreat. Towards the end of July or August a curious thing may be seen in this Lake of the Jocko. A current eddies around and around in a

gigantic whirlpool, transforming it into a mighty funnel with an underground vent. At a considerable distance below a stream bursts forth from the mountain side with terrific energy of pressure and plunges downward in a foaming torrent. It is the Jocko River, — the gentle, merry-voiced Jocko of the prairie which winds its course among lines of friendly trees and blossoms. Who would guess that it drew its nurture from the Lake of the Jocko, siren-haunted, poison-breathed, which careful Indians avoid as a region of the accursed? Still it is so and the menace of that mysterious lake becomes the blessing of the plains.

Such are the Waters of the Forgiven and the Jocko, secure in their solitude, guarded more potently by their spell of evil than by wall of stone or armed hosts, holding within their deep, dark bosoms the charm of the water sirens whose sad, sweet song quavers in the music of

fall and stream, whose pallid, white faces flash lily-like from the depths, whose entangling tresses spread in flowing masses of sedgy green.

And of the strange things which have happened on those shores, of the braves lured to the death-sleep on couches of moss and pillows of lily pad, scarcely an echo shrills down from the white-shrouded peaks to give warning to the adventurers who would seek out the awful beauty of those Enchanted Waters.

LAKE ANGUS McDONALD

CHAPTER III

LAKE ANGUS McDONALD AND THE MAN FOR WHOM IT WAS NAMED

WITHIN the range of Sin-yal-min, which rises abruptly from the valley of the Flathead to altitudes of perpetual snow, in a ravine sunk deep into the heart of the mountains, is Lake Angus McDonald. Though but a few miles distant the bells of Saint Ignatius Mission gather the children of the soil to prayer, no hand has marred the untamed beauty of this lake and its surrounding mountain steeps where the eagle builds his nest in security and the mountain goat and bighorn sheep play unmolested and unafraid.

The prospect is a magnificent one as the roadway uncoils its irregular, tawny length from rolling hills into the level sea of green where only a year or two ago

the buffalo grazed in peace. Beyond, the jagged summits of Sin-yal-min toss their crests against the sky, their own impalpable blue a shade more intense than the summer heavens, their silvered pinnacles one with the drifting cloud. A delicate, shimmering thread like the gossamer tissue of a spider's web spins its length from the ethereal brow of the mountains to the lifted arms of the foothills below. The yellow road runs through the valley, passes the emerald patch around the Mission and thence onward to blue shadows of peaks where gorges flow like purple seas, and distant trees are points of azure. The swelling foothills bear one up, the valley melts away far beneath and sweet-breathed woods sigh their balsam on the breeze. The pass becomes more difficult, the growth thickens. Among the trees broad-leafed thimble berry, brew berry and goose berry blossom and bear; wild clematis builds pyramids of green and white over the bushes; syringa bursts into

pale-starred flower, and a shrub, feathery, delicate, sends forth long, tender stems which break into an intangible mist of bloom.

Suddenly out of the tangled forests, a sheet of water, smooth and clear, appears, spreading its quicksilver depths among peaks that still bear their burden of the glacial age. And in the polished mirror of those waters is reflected the perfect image of its mountain crown. First, the purplish green of timbered slopes, then the naked, beetling crags and deep crevasse with its heart of ice. A heavy silence broods here, broken only by the wildly lonesome cry of the raven quavering in lessening undulations of tone through the recesses of the crags. Two Indians near the shore flit away among the leaves, timid as deer in their native haunts. Such is Lake Angus McDonald, and yonder, presiding over all, shouldering its perpetual burden of ice, is McDonald's Peak. Strangely beautiful are these liv-

ing monuments to the name and fame of a man, and one naturally asks who was this Angus McDonald that his memory should endure in the eternal mountains within the crystal cup of this snow-fed lake?

The question is worth the answering. Angus McDonald was a Highland Scotchman, sent out into the western wilderness by the Hudson Bay Company. There must have lurked in his robust blood the mastering love of freedom and adventure which led the scions of the House of McDonald to such strange and varied destinies; which made such characters in the Scottish hills as Rob Roy and clothed the kilted clans with a romantic colour totally wanting in their stolid brethren of the Lowlands. In any event, it is certain that Angus McDonald, once within the magic of the wild, flung aside the ties that bound him to the outer world and became in dress, in manner of life and in heart, an Indian. He

took unto himself an Indian wife, begot sons who were Indians in colour and form and like his adopted people, he hunted upon the heights, moved his tipi from valley to mountain as capricious notion prompted, and finally made for himself and his family a home in the valley of Sin-yal-min not far below that lake and peak which do honor to his memory. Physically he was a man of towering stature, standing over six feet in his moccasins; his shoulders were broad and he was very erect. His leonine head was clad with a heavy shock of hair, and his beard, during his later years, snow white, hung to his waist. His complexion was ruddy, his eyes, clear, blue and penetrating. A picturesque figure he must have been, clad in full buckskin leggins and shirt with a blanket wrapped around him. He was known among the Indians and whites through the length and breadth of the country about, and no more strange or striking character quickened the adven-

ture-bearing epoch which we call the Early Days.

As he was free to the point of lightness in his nature, trampling down and discarding every shackle of conventionality, he was likewise bound but nominally by the Christian creed. He believed in reincarnation and his one desire was that in the hereafter, when his soul should be sent to tenant the new body, he might be re-born in the form of a wild, white horse, with proud, arched neck and earth-scorning hoofs, dashing wind-swift over the broad prairies into the sheltering hills.

So it seems fitting that McDonald's Peak and Lake should remain untamed even as their namesake; that the eddying whirlpool of life should pass them by and that in their embrace the native creatures should live and range as of yore. And may it be that within those shadowy gorges, remote from the sight and hearing of man, a wild, white horse goes bounding through the night?

SOME INDIAN MISSIONS

CHAPTER IV

SOME INDIAN MISSIONS OF THE NORTHWEST

MORE than a century after the Spanish Francescans planted the Cross upon the Pacific shores, the French, Belgian and Italian Jesuits or *robes noires,* took their way into the Northwestern wilderness in response to a cry from the people who lived within its solitudes. Civilization follows the highways of intercourse with the outer world, so the Western coast had passed through the struggle of its beginnings and entered into a period of prosperity and peace, while that territory with the Rocky Mountains as its general center, was still as primeval as when the galleons of Juan de Fuca sailed into Puget Sound.

The mellowness of old romance, the

warmth of Latin colour, hang over the Missions of California. The pilgrim lingers reverently in their cloistered recesses, breathing the scent of orange blossoms, reposing in the shade of palm and pepper trees. With the song of the sea in his ears and its sapphire glint in his eye he re-lives the olden days, weaves for himself out of imagination's threads, a picture as harmonious in its tones of faded rose and gray as an ancient tapestry. How much the architectural beauty of these Missions has brought them within the affectionate regard of the people it is hard to say, but undoubtedly it has had an influence. The graceful lines of arch and pillar, the low, broad sweep of roof and corridor, the delicate, yellowish-white of the adobe outlined against a sky of royal blue, stir the sleeping sense of beauty in our hearts and make us pause to worship at such favoured shrines.

It is for precisely the opposite reason that we are drawn to the Missions of the

Northwest. Austere, ascetic in form, they make their appeal because of their unadorned simplicity. They were originally the plainest structures of logs, added to as occasion demanded and always constructed of such homely materials as the surrounding country could yield. Hands unaccustomed to other labours than telling the rosary or making the sign of the Cross, hewed forest trees and wrought in wood the symbol of their teaching. No wonder, then, that the buildings were small and crude, but their lack of grandeur was the best testimony to the sacrifice and noble purpose of which they were the emblems. Overlooked, isolated they stand, passed by and all but unknown. Yet they are monuments of heroic achievement and devotion; brave men risked their lives willingly to lay these foundation stones of the faith; bitter struggles were fought and won in their consecrated shadows and upon them is the glamour of thrilling episode.

During the seventeenth century a little band of French missionaries of the order of St. Ignatius journeyed from their native France to Canadian territory with the purpose of spreading the word of God amongst the savages of that benighted land. One of them, Father Ignace Jogues, became the apostle of the Iroquois and died at their hands, a martyr. Strangely enough, his teachings lived after him and were preserved in a measure, at least, by those who had murdered him because of the message he brought.

Years afterwards, about 1815, a small party of Iroquois took their way from the Mission of Caughnawaga, in the neighbourhood of Sault St. Louis, on the banks of the Saint Lawrence River, and proceeded, probably in quest of furs, into the little known and perilous ascents of the Rocky Mountains. This party was headed by one Ignace La Mousse, his given name being by a curious coincidence, the same as that of the martyred

disciple of the Gospel. He was a man of lordly stature and puissance indomitable. Upon their wanderings they came to *Spetlemen,* "the place of the Bitter Root," a mild, fair valley where dwelt a folk kindly in their natures, who called themselves the Selish. These people welcomed the Iroquois, made them at home in their lodges and shared with them the sports of the chase until the visiting Indians were visitors no more and claimed no other land than this.

From the lips of Old Ignace, as he was known, the Selish heard of a mysterious faith symbolized by a Cross, a greater medicine than that of any of the tribes, and of pale-faced, sable-robed priests, who, in the olden time, taught that faith and died happily in the teaching.

The Selish practiced a simple, spontaneous kind of paganism. They believed in a Good and Evil Spirit who were constantly at war. These two powers were symbolized by light and dark-

ness and their heroic battle was pictured in the alternate triumph of day and night. If buffalo came in plenty, if elk and moose were slain and the season's yield were rich, then, according to their notion, the Good Spirit was in the ascendency; but if, on the other hand, Winter rode down from the mountains while their larder was low, if fish would not bite and game could not be caught, the influence of the Evil Spirit prevailed. They believed also, in a future existence, happy or miserable according to the merit or demerit of the soul during its mortal life. The worthy shade passed into eternal Summer time, to a land watered by fair streams and green with meadows; in these streams were countless fishes and in the meadows bands of wild horses and endless herds of the beloved buffalo. There the spirit, united with its family, would ride through all eternity, hunting amongst the ghostly flocks in the Summer sun of happy souls. But those who had

violated the tenets of the tribe, who had been liars, cowards or otherwise dishonourable, and those negative offenders who had been lacking in love for their wives, husbands and children, had sealed for themselves a bitter fate. These outcasts went to an arctic region of everlasting snow where false fires were kindled to torment their frozen limbs with the mocking promise of warmth. Phantom streams offered their parched lips drink, but as they hastened to the banks to quench their thirst, the elusive waters were ever farther and farther away. So ever and anon, through the years that never seemed to die, the shades were doomed to hurry onward through the night and cold of Winter that knows no Spring, in misery as dark as the shadow engulfing them. The Lands of Good and Evil were separated by savage woods, inhabited by hungry wolves, lithe wild cats and serpents coiled to strike. The wretched sinner in his prison of ice, might after a period of pen-

ance, short or long, according to the measure of his offense, expiate his sins and join his brethren in the Happy Hunting Ground.

Besides this general belief held in common by the tribe, they cherished countless myths such as those of the creation and many lesser fanciful legends which formed a part of their religion.

Although these Indians were sincere in this simple, half-poetical mythology, they listened very willingly, like eager children, to Old Ignace, and from him learned to make the sacred sign and repeat the white man's prayer. After knowing something of their mysticism it is not surprising that the greater mysticism of the Catholic Church should appeal to them; that once having heard the story of a faith much in accord with many of their elementary, pre-conceived ideas, they should pursue it tirelessly until they gained that which they most desired.

Time upon time at the councils, the

chiefs discussed a means of getting a Black Robe to come to them. At last, in a mighty assembly, Old Ignace arose and proposed that a delegation be sent to St. Louis to pray that an apostle of the church might come to shed the light of the new faith upon the darkness of the Western Woods. A stir of approval ran through the attentive people, for it was a great and daring thing to think of. But who would go? The journey of about two thousand miles lay over barriers of mountains, rushing torrents, virgin forests where the sun never shone, and worst of all, penetrated the country of their hereditary enemies, the Sioux. In spite of these perils, in the breathless quiet of expectation that had hushed the tribe, four braves came forward and volunteered to undertake the quest.

The knights of the olden days, who went forth sheathed in armour, in goodly cavalcades, to the land of the Saracen in search of the Holy Grail, have gathered

about their memory the white light of heroism, but if their daring and that of these four were weighed impartially, the Indians would rise higher in the scale of glory. Alone, afoot, armed only with such weapons as their skill could contrive, they started out in the Spring of 1831, and in spite of the death that lurked around them, reached their journey's end with the Autumn. The tragical aftermath of that heroic adventure followed quickly. The dangers overcome, the goal won, they failed. Not one among them could speak a word of French or English. They sought out General Clark who had penetrated into their lands, but what brought them from across the Rocky Mountains, through the teeth of perdition to St. Louis, not even he could guess. Picture the tragedy of being within reach of the treasure and unable to point it out! Through General Clark the four emissaries were conducted to the Catholic Church. Monseigneur, the Bishop, was

absent—he whom they had travelled six moons to see. Very soon thereafter, two of the number fell ill as a result of exposure. In their sickness, doomed to die in a strange land far, far from the pleasant glades of their native valley, they made the sign of the Cross and other feeble gestures which some priests who visited them interpreted rightly to be an appeal for baptism and the last rites of the church. The priests accordingly gave them the consolation they prayed for and placed in the hands of each a little crucifix. So rigidly did they press these symbols to their breasts, that they retained them even in death. Still in their final agonies not one word could they tell of that mission for which they were even then yielding up their lives. They died christened Narcisse and Paul and were buried in a Catholic cemetery in the City of St. Louis.

The two survivors, nameless shadows, flitted back into the wild and were lost

forever in the darkness. No tidings of them ever reached the waiting tribe, so they, too, sacrificed themselves to a fruitless cause.

After these things had happened a Canadian, familiar with the Indians, informed the good fathers who these children of the forest were and of their devotion to a Faith, the merest glimmering of which had penetrated to their remote and isolated valley. Then a priest of the Cathedral offered to go with one companion to these zealous Indians when the Spring should make possible the desperate trip.

Meantime, the Selish waited long and anxiously for word from their delegation. Michel Insula, or Red Feather, "Little Chief and Great Warrior," small of stature but mighty of spirit, always distinguished by the red feather he wore, hearing that some missionaries were travelling westward, fought his way through the hostile country and arrived at the

Green River Rendezvous where Indians, trappers and some Protestant ministers were assembled. Insula was dissatisfied with the ministers because they had wives, wore no black gowns such as Old Ignace described, and carried no crucifix. The symbolism of the Catholic Church had impressed him deeply and he would have no other faith, so he and his band returned to their people to tell them that the *robes noires* were not yet come and their brave messengers had perished with their mission unfulfilled.

They were resolute men, these Indians, and never faltering, they determined to send another party upon the same sacred quest. This time Old Ignace, he who had first broached the adventure to the council, arose among the chiefs and warriors and offered to go. He took with him his two young sons. The Summer was already well spent, but he and the lads started out undaunted, and after a terrible period of ceaseless travelling,

smitten with cold and hunger, they reached St. Louis, and Ignace more favoured than the preceding delegation, made known the wants of his adopted tribe to the Bishop, who listened to him kindly and promised to send a priest among his people.

Ignace and his sons returned safely to the Bitter Root Valley and brought the glad tidings to the Selish. But eighteen moons waxed and waned and though the watchful eyes of the Indians scanned the East, never a pale-faced father in robes of black came out of the land of the sunrise.

The chiefs took counsel again. A third time they determined to make their appeal. Once more Ignace La Mousse led the way and in his charge were three Selish and one Nez Percé brave. They fell in with a little party of white people near Fort Laramie, and uniting forces for greater safety, took up the march together. They journeyed onward unmo-

lested until they came to Ash Hollow in the land of the warlike Sioux. In that fateful place three hundred of the hostile tribe surrounded them. The Sioux, wishing only the scalps of the Selish and Nez Percé, ordered the white men and Old Ignace who was dressed in the garb of civilization, to stand apart. The whites obeyed, but Ignace La Mousse, scorning favour or mercy at the enemy's hands, joined his adopted tribal brethren and fought with them until they all lay dead upon the plains. So ended the third expedition.

Once more news of the bloody death of their heroes reached the Selish. A fourth and last party volunteered to undertake that which now seemed a hopeless charge. Two Iroquois, Young Ignace La Mousse, so called to distinguish him from the elder of the name, whose memory was held honourable by the tribe, and Pierre Gaucher, "Left Handed Peter," set out, joining a party of the Hudson Bay Fur

Company's men and making the trip in canoes. They finished the journey in safety and obtained from Monseigneur, the Bishop, the pledge that in the Spring he would send a missionary to the Valley of the Bitter Root. Young Ignace waited at the mouth of Bear River through the Winter in order to be ready to guide the priest to the Selish with the coming of the Spring. Pierre Gaucher returned hot-footed, in triumph, conveying to the tribe the glad tidings that their prayer had been answered; that the Great Black Robe was sending them a disciple to preach the Holy Word. At last, after eight years of waiting, the Selish were to have granted them their hearts' desire. From out of the East the pale-faced, black robed father would come bearing with him the Cross illuminated by the rising sun, casting the benediction of its shadow upon the people and their land.

When the Selish learned from Pierre Gaucher that the *robe noire* was in reality

travelling towards their country even then, the Great Chief assembled his braves and it was decided that the tribe should march forward to meet and welcome their missionary. Accordingly they started in good season and on their way met groups of Kalispehlms, Nez Percés and Pend d'Oreilles, who joined them, swelling their number to about sixteen hundred souls. The ever increasing cavalcade moved on over pass and valley, peak and ford, clad in rich furs, war-eagle feathers and buckskins bright with beads—a gaily coloured column filing through the woods. Finally, in the Pierre Hole Valley they came upon him who was henceforth to be their teacher and guide, Father de Smet, whose memory is held in reverence by the Indians of the present generation.

There was great rejoicing among the Selish, the Nez Percés, the Pend d'Oreilles and the Kalispehlms. They burst into wild shouts of delight, swarming around

the pale priest, shaking his hand and bowing down before him. They conducted him to the lodge of the Great Chief, called the "Big Face," whom Father de Smet has described as one "who had the appearance of a patriarch." The Chief made Father de Smet welcome in these words:

" 'This day the Great Spirit has accomplished our wishes and our hearts are swelled with joy. Our desire to be instructed was so great that four times had we deputed our people to the Great Black Robe in St. Louis to obtain priests. Now, Father, speak and we will comply with all that you will tell us. Show us the way we have to take to go to the home of the Great Spirit.' "

Thus spake the Big Face, Chief of all the Selish, and there before the assembled peoples of the kindred tribes, he offered to the priest his hereditary honours as ruler. His renunciation was sincere, but Father de Smet replied that he had

come merely to teach, not to govern them.

That night in the deepening shadow, the children of the forest gathered together around their new leader and chanted a song of praise. Strange music swelling from untutored lips and awakening hearts into the wild silence which had echoed only the howl of native beasts and the war cry of battle and death! Yet even in that hymn of thanksgiving there was an undertone of unconscious sadness. It was the beginning of a new epoch. The old, poetical wood-myth and paganism were gone; the free range over mountain and plain in the exhilarating chase would slowly give place to the pursuits of husbandry. And this new, shapeless compound of civilization and religion was bringing with its blessings, a burden of obligation and pain. The Indians did not know, the priest himself could not understand, that he was the channel through which these simple, happy folk should

embark upon dangerous, devouring seas.

Father De Smet was a Belgian and he had spent some time with the Pottowatamies, in Kansas. He understood the Indians well and what was most important, he loved them. He remained among the Selish long enough to be assured of their docile nature and sincerity of purpose, then returned to St. Louis to urge the establishment of a permament mission and to ask for assistance to carry on his work. Monseigneur, the Bishop, listened favourably to his appeal and consequently, in the Spring of 1841, Father De Smet, reinforced with two Italian priests, three lay brothers and some other man, started for the Rocky Mountains. The Selish had promised to meet the party at a given place at the base of the Wind River Mountains, on the first day of July. The Indians waited until they were driven by hunger to hunt in more likely fields. The Fathers, learning of this, sent a messen-

LAKE MCDONALD FROM MCDONALD CREEK

ger to recall them, and they hastened back to greet their apostle and his followers. And of that little band there were Charles and François, the sons of Old Ignace, the Iroquois, Simon, the oldest of the tribe, and Young Ignace of great fame, who, we are told, journeyed for four long days and nights having neither food nor drink, in his haste to make good his promise to meet the *robes noires.*

So far was the season advanced that the Selish had started on their buffalo hunt. Therefore, the priests whose supplies were exhausted, with their Indian friends, went on to Fort Hall, procured provisions there, and then proceeded to the Beaverhead River to join the tribe. The priests stayed only a few days among the Indians who were absorbed in the chase, and again took up their journey with the Bitter Root valley as the chosen place of permanent rest. There they had determined to build the Mission, "the

house of the Great Spirit," and there the Selish promised to join them after the hunt was over in the Fall. Along the course of the Hell Gate River they took their way and at last came safely within the green refuge of the valley to lay down their burden and build their church. They selected a fair spot near the present site of Stevensville and laboured long to fashion the pioneer home of the Faith which they called The Mission of St. Mary's. The good priests went farther still and re-named the valley, the river watering it and the highest peak, St. Mary's, so anxious were they in their zeal to eradicate every trace of the old, pagan beliefs of their converts, even to the names of the valleys, lakes and hills!

The element of incongruity and pity in this, the zealous fathers did not appreciate. That a jagged, beetling crest, the home of the thunder cloud, the womb whence issues glacier and roaring stream, fit to be Jove's dwelling, should bear the

mild title of St. Mary's, did not shock their notions of the eternal fitness of things. Happily, the valley with its rose-starred brocade of flowers, is still the Bitter Root and a re-awakening interest is calling the old names from their long oblivion to take their places once again, vesting peak and stream and grassy vale with a significance of meaning totally wanting in the artificial foreign titles forced on them by those who neither knew nor cared for their tradition and sentiment. And even the ancient gods and spirits are no longer despised as evils antagonistic to the salvation of the soul. Lafcadio Hearn expressed pity for the cast-off Shinto gods whose places were usurped by the deities of the Buddhist creed. Likewise, the best Christian amongst us, if he looks beneath the surface into the heart of things, must be conscious of a vague regret for the quaint, mythical lore which cast its glamour over the wilderness; for the poor, vanished

phantoms of the wood and the gods who have fallen from their thrones. Sometimes in the remotest mountain solitudes we dare to acknowledge thoughts we would not harbour elsewhere. Under the pensive appeal of the still forests, the heaven-reaching peaks and stream-songs, we wonder if upon the heights, in deep-bosomed caverns, those sad exiles dwell, casting over the cloistered groves a subtle melancholy, evasive as the shadow of a cloud, fleeting as the sigh of the Summer wind.

But the good fathers of St. Mary's had no such thought for the ancient paganism and its symbols. They were busy planting the Cross, building a chapel, the best that their strength and skill could erect, and other structures necessary for their protection and comfort. It was a labour of love, as much a religious rite as the saying of the Mass, and verily, the ring of the hammers must have seemed in the ears of those devoted men, endless *aves* and *pater*

nosters. Finally the work was done. A comfortable log cabin, large enough to hold nearly the assembled tribe, stood in the valley, and when the Indians returned from the hunt, they were joyful in this, their reward, for all those brave attempts to bring the Light into the Wilderness.

The Mission completed, Father De Smet travelled to Fort Colville in Washington, a journey of more than three hundred miles, to procure seeds and roots, and on his way he stopped among the Kalispehlms, the Pend d'Oreilles and the Cœur d'Alenes, all of whom welcomed him and listened attentively to the message he brought. He took back to his Selish charges at St. Mary's "a few bushels of oats, wheat and potatoes" which he and his brethren sowed. The Indians, like children, watched with wonder, the planting, sprouting, ripening and reaping of the crop, a thing hitherto unknown to them, though husbandry on a small scale

had been practiced at an earlier date by some of the Eastern tribes.

But however truly the Indians loved their new teachers, the *robes noires,* and however sincerely they accepted the tenets of their faith, they still persisted in buffalo hunts, which twice a year took them into the contested country, and upon these expeditions, fired with excitement, alive with all the heritage of passion inspired by the chase, the war path and the intoxication of glory handed down to them through an ancestry so ancient as to be lost in the dimness of beginnings, they forgot for a time, at least, the life of order, industry and religion they had pledged themselves to lead. Therefore, one of the new priests, Father Point, accompanied them on the hunt, but in the abandon of those days when every sense was strained to find the prey, and every nerve was as tense as the bow-string 'ere it speeds the arrow to its mark, it was impossible to preach to them the gentle

word of Christianity, so the Fathers gave up these attempts and remained at the Mission awaiting the return of their straying converts, a situation which was to result sadly for St. Mary's. Meantime the work was growing. The Pend d'Oreilles and Cœur d'Alenes had asked for missionary priests and Father De Smet needed more helpers in the new land.

From St. Mary's, the Mother Mission, Father Point and Brother Huet went forth to minister to the Cœur d'Alenes, where they established the Mission of the Sacred Heart. A third Mission, St. Ignatius, was founded amongst the Kalispehlms on the Pend d'Oreille River. With these two offshoots from the parent stem of St. Mary's, it was necessary for Father De Smet to seek re-inforcement abroad, but before he sailed he started westward three new recruits from St. Louis.

It must have been an inspiring sight

when this humble priest, fresh from the western woods, the scent of the pines exhaling from him, the breadth of vast distances in his vision, the simplicity of the Indians' racial childhood reflected in his own nature, stood before his August Holiness, Pope Gregory XVI., in the grandeur of the Vatican at Rome, and there, amidst the pomp and ostentation, the wealth and luxury of the headwaters of that Church which sends its streams to the utmost corners of the earth, pled the cause of the lowly Indian. More imposing still, it must have been, when His Holiness arose from his throne and embraced this apostle from the great, New World. The Pope sought to make the priest a bishop, but Father De Smet chose to remain as he was, and certainly in the eyes of unprejudiced laymen, he gained in simple dignity more than he foreswore in ecclesiastical honors.

This trip of Father De Smet to Europe has a peculiar interest in that it was the

means of bringing into the West, besides numbers of pioneer Sisters, and clergy, a man so beloved, so revered that his name —Father Ravalli—is known by Catholic and Protestant, Indian and White alike, through the whole of the Rocky Mountain region. Those who knew the gentle old man loved him not only for his spirituality, but for his human sweetness. He possessed that breadth of sympathy which sheds mercy on good and bad equally, commiserating the fallen, pitying the weak. He was a native of Ferrara, Italy, and at a very early age decided to become a missionary priest. That he might be most useful materially as well as religiously, he fitted himself for his work. He graduated in *belles lettres,* philosophy, the natural sciences, and became a teacher in these branches of learning, in several cities of Italy. Under a skilled physician of Rome he studied medicine; in a mechanic's shop he learned the use of tools; finally, in a studio, he practiced the

rudiments of art which he always loved. So he came to the Indians bringing with him great human kindliness, and the knowledge of crafts and homely pursuits that made their lives more easy and independent. It was he who devised the first crude mill, the means of giving the people flour and bread, he who by a hundred ingenious devices lightened the burden of their toil. But most of all was his practice of medicine a mercy. To stricken infancy or old age he was alike attentive; to dying Christians he bent with ready ear and alleviating touch, or as compassionately eased the last throes of highwaymen, heretic or murderer. Over the bleak, snowy passes of the mountains, heedless of hardship or danger, he hurried in answer to the appeal of the sick, no matter who they were or where they dwelt. And though often those whe went before or came after him were robbed, he was never molested. The most desperate of the "road agents" respected him and suffered

him to pass in peace on his way. Gently brave, like the good bishop in *Les Miserables,* his very trustfulness was his safeguard. Perhaps as striking an example of his forethought as we can find is the fact that he trained a squaw to give intelligent care to women in the throes of childbirth. There is no record of the mothers and babes spared thus, but there were many, and even the letter of the monkish law never stayed his helping hand or curbed his humane devotion. The more ascetic brethren who lived in colder spiritual altitudes, looked doubtfully upon Father Ravalli's impartial ministry; the more astute financiers who held the keys to the Church's coffers, frowned upon his unrewarded toil, and there comes a whisper through the years that there were times when he was an object of charity because he never asked reward for the surcease of suffering his patient vigils brought.

He travelled from one to another of

the Northwestern missions and even to Santa Clara, California, but he is known best and loved most as the Apostle of the Selish at St. Mary's. Indeed, looking back through the perspective of time at the plain, little Mission crowned as with an aureole, one figure stands out clearly among the pious priests, who, in turn, presided at its altar, and this figure is Father Ravalli.

His grave, marked by a shaft of stone, is within the shadow of the church in the valley of the Bitter Root, and it was fitting he should lie down to rest where he had laboured so long and lovingly. A generation hence, when the hallowed places of the West become shrines about which pilgrims shall gather reverently, this mountain-tomb of the gentle old priest will be visited and written of. Meantime, he sleeps as sweetly for the solitude, and those whose lives he made more beautiful by his presence think of him at peace as they turn their eyes heav-

enward to the infinite rosary of the stars.

In spite of the progress of the beneficent work and the fresh blood that had infused new strength into the cause, dark days were to cast their shadow upon the little Mission of St. Mary's. No power could restrain the Selish from the chase, and during their absence twice a year, the colony left behind, consisting only of the priest and those too aged or sick to follow the tribe, were menaced by the Blackfeet and Bannock Indians. The old feud was fanned red hot by the Selish killing two Blackfeet warriors who invaded the very boundaries of the Mission with hostile intent. The threats from the Blackfeet became more terrible. They lurked in the thick timber and brush around the stockade which enclosed the Mission, and, finally, while the tribe was absent on a buffalo hunt, a rumour reached the anxious watchers that the hostiles would descend in a great war party upon the defenseless community. And indeed, they were

roused by war whoop and savage yell to see swarming around their weak barricade, the dreaded enemy. Father Ravalli was in charge of the Mission at that time and he and his companions prepared themselves for the death which seemed inevitable. But the Blackfeet, probably seeing that only a man stricken with years, two young boys and a few aged women and little children were all of their hated foe who remained at St. Mary's, retreated to the brush. One of the two boys ventured to the gate to make sure the Blackfeet were gone and was shot dead. This tragical incident and the more awful menace it carried with it to those who were left at the mercy of the invading tribes, and another reason we shall now consider, led to the temporary abandonment of St. Mary's.

In those early days, the missions being the only habitations within many hundreds of miles, became the refuge and abiding place during bitter weather, of

French-Canadian and mixed breed trappers, who in milder seasons ranged over the mountains and plains in pursuit of furs. These half-savage men were undoubtedly a picturesque part of the old, woodland life and their uncouth figures lent animation and colour to the quiet monotone of the religious communities. In the first quarter of the last century we find mention of French-Canadians employed by the Missouri Fur Company, appearing on New Year's Eve, clad in bison robes, painted like Indians, dancing *La Gignolee* to the music of tinkling bells fastened to their dress, for gifts of meat and drink. These trappers were, in the day of St. Mary's Mission, a licentious, roistering band with easy morals, consciences long since gone to sleep, who did not hesitate to debauch the Indians, and who feared neither man nor devil. They went to St. Mary's as to other shrines, and under the pretext of practicing their religion, lived on the missionaries' scanty

stores and filled the idle hours with illicit pastimes. It is said that they became revengeful because of the coolness of their reception by the priests, and maliciously set about to poison the Selish against the beloved *robes noires*. However this may be, whether the wayward, capricious children strayed or not, it is certain that they would not sacrifice the buffalo hunt for priest nor promise of salvation, so the Mission was dismantled and leased; its poor effects packed and the Apostles of the Faith started out again to seek refuge in new fields. At Hell's Gate, the inferno of the Blackfeet, they parted; Father Ravalli to wend his way to the Mission of the Sacred Heart among the Cœur d'Alenes; the rest, under the escort and protection of Victor, the Lodge Pole, Great Chief of the Selish and father of Charlot, followed the Coriacan defile to the Jocko River and finally arrived at St. Ignatius, the Mission of the Kalispehlms.

For a time we leave St. Mary's in the

sad oblivion of desertion, while those who had tended its altar, poor pilgrims, toiled over diverse trails toward different destinations.

It is not necessary to follow the varying fortunes of the few, small missions in the Northwestern wilderness, included then within the vast territory called Oregon. Each has its pathetic story of privation and danger, which may be found complete and detailed in ecclesiastical histories written by priests of the order.

We shall pass on to the Mission of St. Ignatius, whither the party from St. Mary's sought refuge, which, in the course of time absorbed some of the lesser institutions and became, as we shall see, the religious center of several tribes. The Mission of St. Ignatius was the same founded by Father Point on the banks of the Pend d'Oreille River among the Kalispehlms in the year 1844. The original location proved undesirable, so ten years later the Mission was moved to a

site chosen by the advice of Alexander, Chief of the tribe. A wonderful revelation it must have been when the Indian guide, leading the priests through a pass in the mountains, the secret of his people, showed them the vast sea of flowing green —the valley of Sin-yal-min—barred to the East by the range of the same name. There ever-changing shades of violet and lights of gold altered the mien of these mountains whose jagged peaks showed white with snow, from whose deep bosoms burst a water-fall plunging from mighty altitudes into the emerald bowl of the valley. This was veritably a kingdom in itself, and no white man had trodden the thick embroidery of wild flowers and grass. It had been a gathering place for many tribes. Within its luxuriantly fruitful limits, berries and roots grew in plenty and game abounded in the neighbouring hills.

In the very palm of Sin-yal-min the new Mission of St. Ignatius was builded.

There could scarcely have been a more ideal spot for church and school, forming the nucleus of an agricultural community. There gathered parties of the upper and lower Kalisphelms, upper Kootenais, Flat Bowes, Pend d'Oreilles and Selish, to pitch their tipis in the shadow of the Mission Cross. Many of these Indians made for themselves little farms where they laboured and lived. Entire families of Selish moved from the Bitter Root valley to be near the *robes noires* they loved. St. Ignatius possessed an advantage that bound the Indians to it by permanent ties and that was its schools. Four pioneer Sisters travelling into the Rocky Mountain region under the guidance of two priests and two laymen, from their home mission in Montreal, founded at St. Ignatius the first girls' school among the Indians of the territory. Not long thereafter the priests established a similar school for boys, where they taught not only the French and English languages

and the rudiments of a simple education, but also such handicrafts as seemed most necessary to the development of industry. In saddle-making particularly, the boys excelled, and wonderful specimens of leather work have gone forth from the Mission shops. Thus, largely through its practical industry St. Ignatius grew into a powerful institution. Building after building was added to the group until a beautiful village sprang up, half hidden among clumps of trees and generous vines. On the outskirts of this community rows of tiny, low, thatch-roofed log cabins were built by the Indians to shelter them when they assembled to celebrate such feasts as Christmas, Good Friday and that of St. Ignatius, their patron Saint.

The fates favoured St. Ignatius. In the year of its removal the Hell's Gate treaty was signed wherein the bounds of the reservation were re-adjusted, making the new mission the center of that rich do-

minion. The treaty of the Hell Gate, participated in by the Selish, the Pend d'Oreilles and some of the Kootenais, was the same, it may be remembered, wherein Victor, the father of Charlot, insisted upon retaining possession of the Bitter Root Valley "above the LoLo Fork" for himself and his people, unless after a fair survey by the United States, the President should deem it best to move the tribe to the Jocko. This agreement was entered into in 1855. Seventeen years went by. The Indians declare that no survey was ever made during that time nor were they furnished with school teachers, skilled artisans and agriculturalists to instruct them, as had been promised on the part of the government. Summarily the Selish were called upon to sign a second agreement, the Garfield treaty, which deprived them of their ancestral home and drove them forth to share the Jocko Reservation in common with the allied tribes. This was at once an impetus to the fortunes of

St. Ignatius and a mortal blow to St. Mary's.

That pioneer shrine, abandoned on account of the depredations of the Blackfeet, remained dark and silent for sixteen years. The Selish mourned the loss of their friends and teachers, the *robes noires*. In spite of the absence of the church's influence, save such intermittent inspiration as the occasional visit of a priest, the Selish prayed and waited. And surely, poor, impulsive children that they were, if they had been misled by talebearing, mixed breed trappers, their digression was dearly expiated. During those sixteen years they remained faithful to the cause which four delegations of their number had braved danger, privation and death to win.

In the meantime the West was changing. The first stern, ascetic days were passing when the best of men's characters was called into active existence to cope with immediate hardship; when every

nerve rang true, tuned to the highest bravery and that magnificent indifference to death which makes heroes. The cry of gold ran through the length and breadth of the land and the headlong rush of adventurers, good and bad, from the four corners of the earth, all bent on wealth, changed the spirit of the western world. In that mad stampede, men, spurred by the lust of gain, pushed and crowded each other, and with such competition, who thought of or cared for the Indian? His day was done; the accomplishment of his ruin was merely a matter of years. Moreover, the lower element of the reckless, pillaging crew of gold seekers brought with it the vices of civilization—drink and the game.

Change the ideal which inspires a deed and the deed itself is changed. That first, stern West which taught men not to fear by surrounding them with danger, made heroes of them because they had braved the unknown for some noble pur-

pose, religion, the simple love of Nature or another reason as good; but in these altered conditions where debauching gain was the one object of their quest, though they spurned death as the pathfinders had done, their bravery sank to bravado and dare-deviltry because their purpose was sordid.

With this invasion of the wilderness the whole aspect of the mission work underwent a change. The masked man on horseback stalked the trails; the bizarre glamour of the dance hall flaunted its coarse gaiety in the mushroom camps' thronged streets; the saloon and gaming house brought temptation to the Indian, and generally he fell. It was also true that in more than one instance the precedent of bloodshed was set by brigand whites, sowing the seeds which were later to bear a red harvest of war.

So, when St. Mary's opened her doors in 1869, it was upon a period of transition. If the placid image of Our Lady, looking

through half closed eyelids, could have seen and understood the metamorphosis what a shock would have smitten her sainted soul! The painted, war-bent Blackfeet were gone far back into their fastnesses, but here and there, thick and fast, came the white settler, peaceful, cold, inevitable, overwhelming, bringing ruin to the old life and its people—the beginning of the end. And that calm, just Mother of Mankind would have seen the timid shadow-shapes of the Selish melting into the gathering twilight, at once welcoming the stranger to the land and relinquishing it to him, retiring step by step before the great, white inundation. It is useless to prolong the story. The climax had to come, and come it did, swiftly, cruelly, with a dark hint of treachery that we, of the superior race are too willing to excuse and condone. By the Garfield Treaty, which, by a curious anomaly, never very lucidly explained, bears the sign of Charlot, son of Victor, heredi-

tary chief of the Selish, that he, a man in his sane senses swears he never signed, the tribe renounced all claim to the land of their fathers and consented to betake themselves to the Jocko reservation. During the twenty-two years of the existence of St. Mary's as an Indian Mission, after its second opening, the fathers, among them Father Ravalli, watched over and tended their decreasing charge. The numbers of the red hosts dwindled; the falling off of the people through new and unnatural conditions thinned their ranks, but surer still, was the admixture of the white strain, so corrupting in most cases to the unfortunate in whom the two race strains commingle. But in spite of the Garfield Treaty, notwithstanding the exodus of the main body of the Selish, St. Mary's faithful to the end, drew to her little altar the last, failing remnant of the tribe—the splendidly defiant Charlot and his band. At last, in 1891, they accepted the inevitable and rode away to the land of their

exile resigning to the conquering race their blood-right to the Bitter Root. This was the death of St. Mary's. It remained standing, a church of the whites, but an Indian mission no more. In looking back through the years, their mercies and their cruelties, it is a sorrowfully sweet thing to remember that Father Ravalli, guardian spirit of the Selish, lay down to rest before the ultimate change, the final expulsion, while the first light of the wilderness from the altar of St. Mary's still shone, however faintly, to show the way.

The sequel of St. Ignatius is, happily, less pathetic in its unfolding. The life that ebbed from St. Mary's flowed amply into the newer Mission's growing strength and to-day it stands, substantial and prosperous in the valley of Sin-yalmin. Though the same tragedy is about to be enacted, the expulsion, less summary, leaving to the individual Indian his garden patch, St. Ignatius remains a beacon to the dusky hosts, poor frightened

children who cling to this last hope, promising as it does a happiness born of suffering, an ultimate reward which not even the white man can take away. A handsome new church, frescoed by an Italian brother, does service instead of the old chapel, venerable with age that hides behind the sheltering trees. In front of the modern church stands the great, wooden Cross erected by the early fathers, which the Indians kneel to kiss before they go to Mass. And to the right, covered with wild grass, and that neglect of which such vagrant growths are the emblem, is the old cemetery where so many weary pilgrims who travelled long and painfully over difficult trails, have sought peace past the power of dreams to disturb.

Here, as we have seen, upon feast days the Indians come, the scattered bands gathering from mountain and valley, clad in gala attire. Their ranks are thinning fast. The once populous nation of the

Selish is shrunk to between three and four hundred souls, still the little village often holds a thousand Indians all told, from the different neighbouring tribes. And sometimes, bands from far away, distinguished by diversified language, curious basketry and articles of handicraft, come as spectators to the feasts.

Until a few years ago these religious festivals were preceded by solemn rites of expiation. A kind of open air court was held, the chiefs sitting in judgment upon all offenders and acting in the capacity of judges. The whole tribe assembled to watch with impassive gravity the austere spectacle of the accusation, sentence and chastisement of those who had broken the law. All malefactors were either brought before the chiefs, or spurred by conscience, they came forward voluntarily, confessed their guilt and prayed to be expurgated of sin through the sting of the lash. When the accusations and confessions were finished, the multitude

dropped upon their knees and prayed. Then those arraigned were examined and such of them as the chiefs decreed guilty, were sentenced and immediately suffered the penalty. A blanket was spread upon the earth and the offender lay on this, his back exposed to the raw-hide lash which marked in welt-raising strokes the degree of his transgression. Even while he smarted, never wincing under this ordeal, the spectators at the bidding of the chiefs, prayed once again for the culprit's reformation and forgiveness. Such was the practice of the Selish handed down from the earliest days. The time and place of the chastisement were regulated in these later years by the Catholic festivals, but public punishment with the lash was a custom of the tribe before the missionaries penetrated the West. The confession, the judgment and the whipping they believed to be a complete expiation; having suffered, the sin-soiled were made clean, and thus purified, they met and mingled

with the best of their brethren on equal terms, without further reproach. This was a simple and summary form of justice, suited to the people whom it controlled,—was in fact the natural outgrowth of their moral and ethical code—and it is a pity that the ancient law, together with much besides that was desirable in the pristine life of the Indian, has been stamped out beneath the master's iron heel.

One cannot take leave of the missions of the Northwest without looking back upon Father De Smet, their founder, and the work which he began. Through his devotion missions were established among many different nations, even the unyielding Blackfeet falling under the spell of gentleness. And he who lived most of his life either in the wilderness or labouring elsewhere for what he believed to be the salvation of its benighted children, died at last at St. Louis in 1873, after meditative and reminiscent years

spent in recording his travels and his triumphs.

There are some subtle questions crying out of the silence which are not to be pushed back unspoken, even though we can find no answer to their riddle. How far have the missionaries succeeded? If completely, why does the Christian Indian still dance to the Sun? And did those Fathers in their errand of mercy blindly pass to the people they would fain have saved from annihilation the fate they strove to spare them from? Who can say?

The Indians were probably in their racial infancy when the maturer ranks marched in and absorbed, or otherwise destroyed them. It would seem that with them it is a case of arrested development. If left to themselves, through centuries they might have brought forth a civilization diametrically opposite to our own. That they never could nor can assimilate or profit by our social and educational

methods has been sufficiently proved. Their race instincts are essentially as foreign to ours as those of the Hindu, and their evolution must have necessarily proceeded along totally different lines. The Indians were decreed to work out their own salvation or die, and the latter thing has come to pass. One might go on painting mental pictures of what would have been the result if the free, forest-born red race had thrived and grown into maturity. Certainly in their decadence, their spirit-broken second childhood, we find the germ of an original moral sense, of tradition and poetry, even of religion, which might have borne rich fruit.

The Oriental is to us an enigma, and we recognize in his makeup psychic qualities but slightly hinted of in ourselves. So in the Indian we must acknowledge a race of distinct and separate values that we can never wholly know or understand. The races are products of countless centuries begotten of habit and environment;

we cannot put aside these growth-accumulations builded like the rings of the pine, nor can we take that which the Creator made and re-create it to suit our finite ends. Therefore, instead of helping the Indian we are merely killing him, kindly perhaps, with comforts, colleges and sacraments, but none the less surely striking at his life.

And though they are still amongst us, picturesque figures which we value chiefly as relics of a gaily-coloured past, the Indians are the mystery of our continent. They speak to us, they smile at us, they sit within our churches and use our tongue, but for all that they remain forever strangers. What pagan beliefs vibrating through the chain of unrecorded ancestry, what hates, loves, aspirations and bitter griefs, separate from our comprehension as the poles, thrill out of the darkness of yesterday and die unspoken, unformed, beneath those calm, bronze brows? They are a problem to be studied,

never solved; a riddle one with the Sphinx, the Cliff Dwellers and the Aztec ruins. For, after all is said, what do even the good Fathers, with candle, crucifix and creed, know of their primal souls, of the unsounded depths of their hearts?

THE PEOPLE OF THE LEAVES

FRANCOIS

CHAPTER V

THE PEOPLE OF THE LEAVES

AMONG the early Canadian French the Sioux were known as the *Gens des Feuilles,* or People of the Leaves. This poetical title seems very obscure in its meaning, at first, but it may have originated in a legend of the Creation which is as follows:

In the ultimate Beginning, the Great Spirit made the world. Under his potent, life-giving heat the seeds within the soil burst into bloom and the earth was peopled with trees—trees of many kinds and forms, the regal pine and cedar in evergreen beauty and the other hosts whose leaves bud with the Spring, change with the Autumn and die with the Winter's snow. These trees were all possessed of souls and some of them yearned to be free.

The Great Spirit, from his throne in the blue skies, penetrating the slightest shadow of a leaf, divining the least unfolding of a bud with his all-seeing, omnipotently sensitive beams radiating like nerves from his golden heart, perceived the sorrow of the sighing forests and mourned with tears of rain at their discontent. Then he knew that a world of trees, however beautiful, was not complete and he loosed the souls from their prisons of bark and limb and re-created them in the form of Indians, who lived in the shelter of the woods, knit to them by the eternal kinship of primal soul-source —verily the People of the Leaves.

It is not strange that among a nation which adored the sun, the chief ceremony should have been the Sun Dance, at once a propitiatory offering to the Great Spirit and a public test of metal before a young man could become a brave. The custom was an ancient one, as ancient,

perhaps, as the legend of the leaves, and in the accounts of the earliest explorers and missionaries we read of this dance to the sun; of the physical heroism which was the fruit of the torture and filled the ranks of soldiery with men Spartan in fine scorn of pain and contempt of death. It is interesting to trace similar practices in races widely separate in origin, habits and beliefs, and it seems curious that this rite of initiation into the honourable host of the braves, however dissimilar in outer form, was not totally unlike in spirit the test of knighthood for the hallowed circle of the Table Round.

The festival of the Sun Dance was celebrated every year in the month of July, when the omnipotent orb reached his greatest strength, is, indeed, still celebrated, but without the torture which was its reason for being. A pole was driven deep and solid in the ground and from the top, somewhat after the manner of a May-pole, long, stout thongs depended.

After incantations by the Medicine Men, the youths desiring to distinguish themselves came forward in the presence of the assembled multitude, to receive the torture which should condemn them as squaw men or entitle them to fold their blankets as braves.

With a scalping knife the skin was slit over each breast and raised so a thong from the pole could pass beneath and be fastened to the strip of flesh. When all were bound thus, the dance began to the time of a tom-tom and the chant. Goaded by pride into a kind of frenzy the novices danced faster, more wildly, leaping higher, bending lower, until they tore the cords loose from their bleeding bosoms and were free. If, during the ordeal, one fainted or yielded in any way to the agony, he was disgraced before his tribe, cast out as a white-hearted squaw man until the next year's festival, when he might try to wipe out the stain and enter the band of the brave. If, on the

other hand, all the young men bore the torture without flinching, their spirits rising superior to all bodily pain, they were received as warriors and earned the right to wear the medicine bag. Often one of greater puissance than his fellows wished further to distinguish himself by a test extraordinary and submitted to a second torture more heroic than the first. He suffered the skin over his shoulder blades to be slit as his breast had been and through these gashes thongs were drawn and fastened as before, but this time the ends were attached to a sacred bison's skull, kept for the purpose, which the brave dragged over rough, rocky ground and through underbrush, until his strained flesh gave way and freed him of his burden. This feat entitled him to additional honors and he was respected and held worthy by the great men of the tribe.

After the torture, when a youth was declared a brave he retired to the wilder-

ness, there in solitude to await the message of the Great Spirit which would reveal to him his medicine, or charm.

This "making medicine" as it was called, was a rite of most solemn sacredness and secrecy and therefore shrouded in mystery. From the lips of one who, in days past, when the ancient customs were rigidly preserved, followed and watched a newly made brave, the ensuing narrative was gleaned.

After dark the young Indian took his way cautiously far off into silent, unpeopled places where sharp escarpments cut like cameos against the sky. There, poised upon the cliffs, his slim figure silhouetted against the moonlit clouds, he remained rigid as a statue through long hours, waiting for the Voice from Above by whose revelation he should learn wherein his power lay. Then lifting his arms towards the heavens he made strange signs to the watchful stars. So he remained 'till dawn paled from the East, when, having

received his message, he went forth to seek the animal which should hereafter be his manitou, or guardian spirit. Sometimes it was the bison, the elk, the beaver, the weasel or other beast of his native wild. Into his bag he put a tooth or claw and some fur of the chosen creature, with herbs which might be propitious. Such was his charm, his medicine-bag, the source of his valour and safety, to be worn sleeping and waking, in peace and in war; to be guarded with his life and to go with him in death back to the Great Spirit by whom it was ordained.

If a warrior lost his medicine-bag in battle, he became an outcast among his people and his disgrace was not to be wiped out until he slew and took from an enemy's body the medicine-bag which replaced his own and thus retrieved his honour.

Of all the quaint ceremonies connected with the old wood-worship and sun-worship, combining the idea of Begin-

ning and End, of pre-existence and after-existence, none are more interesting than the rites attending the burial of the dead. As the Indians sprang from the forest trees, according to the myth of the leaves, lived in the shadow of the pleasant woods, so at last, they were received into the strong, embracing branches that tossed over them in wild gestures when the Great Spirit spoke in anger from the sky; that tempered the Summer's heat into cooling shadow for their repose; that shed their gift of crimson leaves upon the Indians' devoted heads even as they, themselves, must shed the garb of flesh before the blast of death. Or, sometimes, the dead were exalted upon a naked rock, rising above earth's levels toward the sun. Wherever his resting place might be, the dead man sat upright, if a brave, dressed in his full war regalia, surrounded by his most prized possessions and if he owned a horse, it was shot so its shade might bear his spirit on the long, dark, devious way

to the Happy Hunting Ground. No mournful ghost who met his death in darkness could ever bask in the celestial light of endless Summer-time; he was doomed to become a phantom living in perpetual night. That is the reason none but forced battles were fought after dark; the bravest of the braves feared the curse of everlasting shadow. They believed, too, that no warrior who lost his scalp could enter the fields of the glorious; hence the taking of an enemy's scalp at once killed and damned him. The suicide was likewise barred from Paradise.

Years ago, when the feuds of the hostile tribes still broke into the red vengeance of the war-path, the Sioux and Cheyennes did battle with the Gros Ventres at Squaw Butte, and by some mischance a medicine man of the Sioux, not engaged in the combat, whose generalship lay in marshalling the manitous to the aid of his people, was killed. A trav-

eller, journeying alone in the mountains, found him high upon a cliff with his blanket and war dress tumbling about his bleaching bones, his medicine-bag and all the emblems of his magic preserved intact. In the bag was a grizzly bear's claw, an elk's tooth, and among other trinkets, a small, smooth brass button of the kind worn by the rivermen trading up and down the Missouri River between the East and the savage West. It would be interesting to trace the migrations and transfiguration of that little button from its existence as an humble article of dress to the dignity of a charm in the medicine-bag of the old magician on that isolated cliff. And the Master of Magic himself; he of prophetic powers and knowledge born of intercourse with the gods; there he sat, an arrow through his skull, his blind, eyeless sockets uplifted to the sun, his necromancy unavailing, his wisdom but a dream! In that remote home which his devoted tribesmen chose for

him, no irreverent hand had disturbed his watch, and he is probably still sitting, sitting with blind eyes toward the sun while eagles circle overhead and gray wolves howl to the moon. The years pass on unheeded, the face of the land has changed, is changing, will change, and the rustling, swirling leaves of Autumn fall thick and fast. Mayhap, after all, the old Magic Master, keeping his eternal vigil, may see from beyond the flesh the thinning woods and the dead leaves dropping from the trees; hear their weary rustle—poor ghosts, as they flutter before the wintry wind. And among the lessening trees, also driven by the Northern blast, does he see also, a gaunt and silent troop of phantoms—mere Autumn leaves—whirling away before the Storm?

THE PASSING BUFFALO

CHAPTER VI

THE PASSING BUFFALO

I

IT was summertime in the mountains —that short, passionate burst of warm life between the long seasons of the snow. The world lay panting in the white light of the sun, over gorge and pine-clad hill floated streamers of haze, and along the ground slanted thin, blue shadows. The sky pulsed in ether waves and the distant peaks, azure also, with traceries of silver, were as dim as the memory of a dream. In this untrodden wilderness the passing years have left no record save in the gradual growth of forest trees, and in its rugged beauty it is the same as a century ago. Therefore time itself seems arrested, and it is scarcely strange to come upon a buffalo skull

naked and bleached by sun and rain, and close by, half hidden in the loose rocks, an arrow head of pure, black obsidian.

This, then, was once the scene of a brave chase when wind-swift Indians pursued mad, hurtling herds over mountain slope and plain. These empty fastnesses thrilled to the shock of thousands of beating hoofs, these hills flung back the echo to the brooding silence as the black tide flowed on, pressed by deadly huntsmen armed with barb and bow. And even then, far over the horizon, unseen by hunted and hunters, silent as the shadow of a cloud, inevitable as destiny, came the White Race, moving swifter than either one, driving them unawares toward the great abyss where they should vanish forever into the Happy Hunting Ground, lighted by perpetual Summer and peopled by immortal herds and tribes.

II

In such a remote and deserted place as this, no great effort of the imagination is needed to call up the shades of those who once inhabited it, to react their part in the tragedy of progress. Let us fancy that a riper, richer glow is upon the mountains, that the white light of the sun has deepened into an amber flood which quivers between the arch of lapis-lazuli sky and the warm, balsam-scented earth that sighs forth the life of the woods. Already the trees not of the evergreen kind are hung with bewilderingly gorgeous leaves of scarlet, russet-brown and yellowing green; the haze has grown denser and its ghostly presence insinuates itself among the very needles of the pines. It is Autumn. The gush of life has reached its climax and is ebbing. High on the steepled mountains is a wreath of filmy white that trails low in the ravines. It seems as fragile as a bridal veil, but it is

the foreword of Winter which will soon descend with driving blast and piping gale, lancing sleet and enshrouding snow to chill the last red ember-glow of the brilliant autumnal days. It was at this time that the Indian's blood ran hot with longing for the hunt. Lodges were abandoned and only those too weak to stand the hardship of the march were left behind. Chiefs and braves, women and children struck out for the haunts of the buffalo where the fat herds grazed before the impending cold.

These children of the forest sought their prey with the woodcraft handed down from old to young through unnumbered generations. Indeed, it was necessary for them to outwit the game by strategy in the early days before the wealthy and progressive Nez Percé Kayuses, who were first to break the wild horses of the western plains, brought the domesticated pony among them. In passing, it is interesting to know that the term "cayuse"

applied to all Indian horses, had its origin with this tribe, since the chief article of trade of the Kayuses was the horse, the horse of Indian commerce became known as a "cayuse." The Selish used the method of the stockade. After the march into the buffalo country, they camped in a spot where they could easily fashion an enclosed park by means of barricades built among the trees. A great council of the chiefs and warriors was held and this august body appointed a company of braves to guard the camp and prevent any person from leaving its boundaries lest in so doing the wily buffalo should become alarmed and quit the neighbouring hills. The council proclaimed anew the ancient laws of the chase, and then began the building of the pen. This was a kind of communal work in which the entire tribe engaged, and as all contributed labor so all should benefit alike from its fruits. There within the mock park, whose pleasant green fringe of trees was in reality a

prison wall, would be trapped and killed the food for the sterile winter months, when, but for that bounty, starvation would stalk gaunt among them and lay the strongest warrior as low as a new born babe or the feebly old who totter on the threshold of death. The place chosen for the pen was a level glade and the enclosure was built with a single opening facing a cleft in the surrounding hills. From this opening, an avenue also cunningly fenced and gradually widening towards the hills, was constructed, so that the animals driven thither, could escape neither to the right nor the left, but must needs plunge into the imprisoning park.

Next came the election of the Master of Ceremonies, the Lord of the Pen. He was a man seasoned with experience, mighty with the knowledge of occult things—one of the *Wah-Kon,* Medicine Men or jugglers, who possessed the power of communicating with the Great Spirit. This high functionary determined the

crucial moment when the hunt should begin, and when the buffalo, roused from the inertia of grazing, should be driven into the snare. In the center of the clearing he posted the "medicine-mast," made potent by three charms, "a streamer of scarlet cloth two or three yards long, a piece of tobacco and a buffalo horn," which were supposed to entice the animals to their doom. It was he who, in the early dawn, aroused the sleeping camp with the beating of his drum and the chanting of incantations; who conferred with the great Manitous of the buffalo to divine when the time for the chase had come.

Under the Grand Master were four swift runners who penetrated into the surrounding country to find where the buffalo were browsing and to assist by material observation the promptings of the spirits of the hunt. They were provided by the Grand Master with a *Wah-Kon* ball of skin stuffed with hair, and

when the herds were found in a favourable spot and the wind blew from the direction of the animals to the pen, one of the runners, breathless with haste, bearing in his hand the magic ball, appeared before the Grand Master and proclaimed the joyful news. There was a mighty beating of the Grand Master's drum, and out of the lodges ran the excited people, all bent with concentrated energy upon the approaching sport. Every horseman mounted, and those less fortunate armed themselves and took their positions in two lines extending from the entrance to the enclosure toward the open, separating more widely as the distance from the pen increased, thus forming a V shape with but a narrow gateway where the lines converged.

Then through the silent, human barricade rode the bravest of the braves, astride the fleetest horse and he went unarmed, always against the wind, enveloped in a buffalo skin which hung down

over his mount. All was quiet. Only the light Autumn wind flowing through the trees carried the curious, crisp, cropping noise of thousands of iron-strong jaws tearing the lush, green grass. And as the rider came upon the crest of the hill and looked at the panorama of waving verdure peopled by multitudes of bison stretching far away across the meadows and over the rolling ground beyond, it must have been a sight to quicken the pulses and stir the blood. Suddenly there sounded a prolonged and distressing cry —the cry of a buffalo calf which wailed shrilly for a moment, then ceased. It came from the brave alone in the open, shrouded in the buffalo hide.

There was a movement in the herd. Every heavily maned head rose, and quivering nostrils snuffed the running wind. At first the buffalo advanced slowly, as if in doubt; gradually their pace quickened to a trot, a gallop, then lo! the whole vast band came hurtling and lurching in

its furious career like the swells of a tempestuous, black sea, breaking into angry waves at every shock. And from those deep throats came a mighty roar, ponderous and resonant as the thunder of the surf.

Still the cry of the calf reverberated and re-echoed, and the single horseman crouching beneath his masquerade, led the herd on and on, eluding their onslaught, luring them forward between the lines of his companions who stood silent, trembling with eagerness for the sport. Then pell-mell the mounted hunters rushed out from cover and the wide extremes of the V shaped line closed in so that the horsemen were behind the herd. This done, the wind blowing toward the corral, took the scent of the Indians to the buffalo. Pandemonium reigned. Men, women and children on foot, leaped out from their hiding places with demoniac yells, brandishing spears, hurling stones and shooting arrows from

their bows. The stampeded animals, surrounded save for the one loophole ahead, plunged into the pen. The chase was over and the slaughter began. The tribe would live well that Winter-time!

* * * *

Among the Omawhaws of the first part of the last century, the hunt was preceded by much preparation and ceremony. Generally by the month of June their stores of jerked buffalo meat were well-nigh exhausted, and the little crops of maize, pumpkins, beans and water-melons, with the yield of the small hunting parties pursuing beaver, otter, elk, deer and other game, were scarcely sufficient to fill the wants of the tribe. So, after the harvesting and trading were done, the chiefs called a council and ordered a feast to be held in the lodge of one of the most distinguished of their number, to which all hunters, warriors and chiefs should be invited. Accordingly the squaws of the chosen host were commanded by him to

make ready the choicest maize and the plumpest dog for the ceremonial board. When all was in readiness the host called two or three venerable criers to his lodge. He smoked the calumet with them, then whispered that they should go through the village proclaiming the feast and bidding the guests whom he named. He instructed the criers to "speak in a loud voice and tell them to bring their bowls and spoons." They sallied forth singing among the lodges, calling to the distinguished personages to come to the banquet. After these summons the criers went back to the lodge of the host, quickly followed by the guests who were seated according to their rank. The ceremony of smoking was performed first, then the Head Chief arose, thanked his braves for coming and explained to them the object of the assembly, which was the selection of a hunting ground and the appointment of a time to start. After him the others spoke, each giving his opinion frankly,

but always careful to be respectful of the opinions of others.

Neither squaws nor children were suffered to be present. The criers tended the kettle and when the speech-making was done, one dipped out a ladle of soup, held it toward the North, South, East and West, and cast it into the ashes of the fire. He also flung a bit of the best part of the meat into the flame as a sacrifice to *Wahconda,* the Great Spirit. The guests then received their portions, the excellence of which depended upon their rank. The feast closed as it began, with the smoking of the calumet and at its conclusion the criers went forth again, chanting loud songs in praise of the generosity of the host, enumerating the chiefs and warriors who partook of his bounty, finally proclaiming the decision of the council and announcing the time and place of the hunt. This was an occasion of great rejoicing. The squaws at once began to mend the clothing and the weapons of

their lords and pack their goods; and the young braves, gay with paint and bright raiment, beguiled the hours with gaming and dancing in the presence of the chiefs.

When the day of the journey arrived the whole community departed, the chiefs and wealthy warriors on horseback, the poorer folk afoot. Sometimes the quest of the buffalo was prolonged over weary weeks, and a meager diet of *Pomme blanche* or ground-apple, was insufficient to stay the pangs of hunger that assailed the tribe. The hunters preceded the main body, carefully reconnoitering the country for bison or foes. When at length herds were discovered, the hunters threw up their robes as a signal, the tribe halted and the advance party returned to report. They were received with pomp and dignity by the chiefs and medicine men who sat before the people solemnly smoking and offering articulate thanks to *Wahconda.* In a low voice the hunters in-

formed the dignitaries of the presence of buffalo. These mighty personages, in turn, questioned the huntsmen as to the numbers and respective distances of the herds, and they replied by illustrating with small sticks the relative positions of the bands.

An old man of high standing then addressed the people, telling them that the coveted game at length was nigh, and that on the morrow they would be rewarded for the long fast and fatigue.

That night a council was held and a corps of stout warriors elected to keep order. These officers painted themselves black, wore the *crow* and were armed with war-clubs in order that they might enforce the mandates of the council and preserve due decorum among the excited tribe folk.

Early in the morning the hunters on horseback, carrying only bows and arrows and the warriors provided with war-clubs, led by the pipe-bearer who bore

the sacred calumet, advanced on foot. Once in view of the splendid, living masses covering the green plains as with a giant sable robe, they halted for the pipe-bearer, the representative of the Magi, to perform the propitiatory rite of smoking. He lighted his calumet of red, baked clay, bowed his head in silence, then held the stem in the direction of the herds. After this he smoked, exhaling the aromatic clouds towards the buffalo, the heavens, the earth and the four points of the compass, called by them the "sunrise, sunset, cold country and warm country," or by the collective term of the "four winds." At the completion of this ceremony the head chief gave the signal and the huntsmen charged upon their prey.

From this point their methods were somewhat the same as those of the Selish, except that instead of building a stockade, they, themselves, enclosed the herd in a living circle, pressing closer and closer upon it until the killing was complete.

This surrounding hunt was called *Ta-wan-a-sa.*

The chase was the grand event, the test of horsemanship, of archery, of fine game-craft and often the opportunity for glory on the war-path as well—for where the buffalo abounded there lurked the hidden enemy, also seeking the coveted herds, and an encounter meant battle to the death. Both ponies and hunters were trained to the ultimate perfection of skill and the favoured buffalo horse served no other purpose than to bear his master in the chase. As the cavalcade descended upon the startled game, the rider caressed his faithful steed, called him "father," "brother," "uncle," conjured him not to fear the angry beasts yet not to be too bold lest he be hurt by goring horns and stamping hoofs, and urged him with honeyed speech to the full fruit of his strength and cunning. And the horse, responding, flew with wingéd stride, unguided by reins to the edge of the com-

pact, fleeing band, never hesitating, never halting until the shoulder of the animal pursued, was exposed to the death-dealing shot. It was just behind the shoulder blade that the huntsman sought to strike. The inclination of his body in one direction or another was sufficient to send the horse speeding after fresh prey.

The hunters, themselves, scorned danger and knew not fear. If they were uncertain how deep the arrow had penetrated they rode close to the infuriated brute to examine the nature of the shot, and if necessary to shoot again. And even though in the grand *melée,* a single animal was often pierced with many arrows, there were seldom quarrels as to whom the quarry belonged, so nicely could they reckon the value of the different shots and determine which had dealt the most speedy death.

Onward and onward they sped, circling and advancing at once, like a whirlwind on the face of the prairie. At length,

the darting riders were seen more and more vividly as they compressed their line about the routed band, until finally, only a heap of carcasses lay where the herd had been. Then the tribe came upon the scene. The squaws cut and packed the meat. If a hunter were unfortunate and killed no game, he helped dissect the buffalo of a lucky rival. On completion of his task he stuck his knife in the portion of the meat he desired and it was given to him as compensation for his labor.

Someone, either by order of the chief or of his own free will, presented his kill to the Medicine for a feast. There was great revelry and joy, dancing and eating of marrow bones, to celebrate the aftermath of the royal sport.

III

Although the meat of the buffalo was the Indians' chief article of food, this was by no means the only bond between the

red man and the aboriginal herds of the plains. Besides the almost innumerable utilitarian purposes for which the different parts of the animals were used, there was scarcely a phase of life or a ceremony in which they did not figure. In the dance, a rite of the first importance, in the practice of the *Wah-Kon*, or medicine, in the legends of the creation and the after-death, the buffalo had his place. Such lore might make a quaint and curious volume, but we shall consider only the more striking uses and traditions of the bison in their relation to the life of the early West.

The buffalo was, in truth, the great political factor among the tribes; nearly all of the bitter warfare between nation and nation was for no other purpose than to maintain or gain the right to hunt in favourable fields. Thus the Judith Basin, the region of the Musselshell and many other haunts of the herds, became also battle fields of bloodshed and death. Not

only did the bison cause hostilities among the nations, but they were likewise the reason of internal strife. It is said that the Assiniboines, or Sioux of the Mountains, separated from the main body of the tribe on account of a dispute between the wives of two rival chiefs, each of whom persisted in having for her portion the entire heart of a fine bison slain in the chase. This was the beginning of a feud which split the nation into independent, antagonistic tribes.

The utmost economy was generally observed by the early Indians in the use of the buffalo. Each part of the animal served some particular purpose. The tongue, the hump and the marrow bones of the thighs were considered the greatest delicacies. The animals killed for meat were almost always cows, for the flesh of buffalo bulls could be eaten only during the months of May and June.

Among the Omawhaws of nearly two centuries ago, all the meat save the hump

and chosen parts reserved for immediate use, was cut into "large, thin slices" and either dried by the heat of the sun or "jerked over a slow fire on a low scaffold." After being thoroughly cured it was compressed into "quadrangular packages" of a convenient size to carry on a pack saddle. The small intestines were carefully cleaned and turned inside out to preserve the outer coating of fat, then dried and woven into a kind of mat. These mats were packed into parcels of the same shape and size as the meat. Even the muscular coating of the stomach was preserved. The large intestines were stuffed with flesh and used without delay. The vertebrae were pulverized with a stone axe after which the crushed bone was boiled. The very rich grease that arose to the surface was skimmed and preserved in bladders for future use. The stomach and bladder were filled with this and other sorts of fat, or converted into water bottles. All of the cured meat was

cached, in French-Canadian phrase, until hunger drove the Indians to draw upon these stores.

The pemmican of song and history was a kind of hash made by toasting buffalo meat, then pulverizing it to a fine consistency with a stone hammer. Mr. James Mooney in the *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology,* describes the process as follows; "In the old times a hole was dug in the ground and a buffalo hide was staked over so as to form a skin dish, into which the meat was thrown to be pounded. The hide was that from the neck of the buffalo, the toughest part of the skin, the same used for shields, and the only part which would stand the wear and tear of the hammers. In the meantime the marrow bones are split up and boiled in water until all the grease and oil comes to the top, when it is skimmed off and poured over the pounded beef. As soon as the mixture cools, it is sewed up into skin bags (not

the ordinary painted parfléche cases) and laid away until needed. It was sometimes buried or otherwise cached. Pemmican thus prepared will keep indefinitely. When prepared for immediate use, it is usually sweetened with sugar, mesquite pods, or some wild fruit mixed and beaten up with it in the pounding. It is extremely nourishing, and has a very agreeable taste to one accustomed to it. On the march it was to the prairie Indian what parched corn was to the hunter of the timber tribes, and has been found so valuable as a condensed nutriment that it is extensively used by arctic travellers and explorers. A similar preparation is used upon the pampas of South America and in the desert region of South Africa, while the canned beef of commerce is an adaptation from the Indian idea. The name comes from the Cree language, and indicates something mixed with grease or fat. (Lacombe.)"

Among the Sioux at Pine Ridge and

Rosebud, in the ceremony of the Ghost Dance, pemmican was celebrated in the sacred songs. Mr. Mooney gives the translation of one of them:

"Give me my knife,
Give me my knife,
I shall hang up the meat to dry—Ye'ye'!
I shall hang up the meat to dry—Ye'ye'!
Says grandmother—Yo'yo'!
Says grandmother—Yo'yo'!
When it is dry I shall make pemmican,
When it is dry I shall make pemmican,
Says grandmother—Yo'yo'!
Says grandmother—Yo'yo'!"

Though at first the main object for which the buffalo was hunted was the flesh, next in importance and afterwards foremost, was the hide made into the buffalo robe of commerce. Since these robes played such an important part in the early traffic and were partly responsible for the annihilation of the bison, it is worth while to consider how they were

procured and treated. The skins to be dressed were taken in the early Spring while the fur was long, thick and luxuriant. Those obtained in the Autumn called "Summer skins" were used only in the making of lodges, clothing, and for other domestic purposes. To the squaws was assigned the preparation of the hides as well as the cutting and curing of the meat. Immediately after the hunt while in the "green" state the skins were stretched and dried. After this, they were taken to the village and subjected to a process of curing which was carried on during the leisure of the women. The hide was nearly always cut down the center of the back so that it could be more easily manipulated. The two parts were then spread upon the ground and scraped with a tool like an adze until every particle of flesh was removed. In this way all unnecessary thickness was obviated and the hide was made light and pliable. When the skin had been reduced to the

proper thinness a dressing made of the liver and brains of the animal were spread over it. This mixture was allowed to dry and the same process was repeated save that in the second instance while the hide was wet it was stretched in a frame, carefully scraped with pumice stone, sharp-edged rocks or a kind of hoe, until it was dry. To make it as flexible as possible, it was then drawn back and forth over twisted sinew. The parts were sewed together with sinew and the buffalo robe was ready for the trader's hands.

As early as 1819 these robes were in great demand and one trader reported that in a single year he shipped fifteen thousand to St. Louis.

In the everyday life of the Indians the products of the buffalo yielded nearly every comfort and necessity. The hides were used not only for robes and portable lodges which furnished shelter on the march, but they were made into battle shields; upon their tanned sur-

face the primitive artist traced his painted record of the chase, the fray, or the mystic medicine. They were laid upon the earth for the young braves to play their endless games of chance upon, and the wounded were taken from the field on stretchers of buffalo hides swung between a pair of ponies. From them two kinds of boats were made. One, described by James in his account of the journey of his party in 1819-20 is as follows:

"Our heavy baggage was ferried across in a portable canoe, consisting of a single bison hide, which we carried constantly with us. Its construction was extremely simple; the margin of the hide being pierced with several small holes, admits a cord, by which it is drawn into the form of a shallow basin. This is placed upon the water, and is kept sufficiently distended by the baggage which it receives; it is then towed or pushed across. A canoe of this kind will carry from four to five hundred pounds."

The second variety, known as a "bull-boat," was made of willows woven into a round basket and lined with buffalo hide.

The grease of these beasts was used to anoint the Indians' bodies and to season the maize or corn.

From the horns were made spoons, sometimes holding half a pint, and often ornamented upon the handles with curious carving.

The shoulder blade fastened to a stick served for a hoe or a plow.

From the hide of unborn buffalo calves bags were made to contain the war-paint of braves.

It would be at once possible and profitable to continue enumerating the practical uses of the buffalo, but far more interesting than these facts were the ceremonies, superstitions and traditions in which they were bound up.

Perhaps, first among the rites in sacred significance and solemn dignity was the smoking of the calumet. This was sup-

posed to be not only an expression of peace among men and nations, but a propitiatory offering to the Manitous, or guardian spirits, and to the Master of Life.

According to Colonel Mallory in the *Tenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology,* the Sioux believed that this supreme emblem of good will was brought to them by a white buffalo cow, in the old days when the different bands of the nation were torn with internal strife. During this period of hostility a beautiful white buffalo cow appeared, bearing a pipe and four grains of corn, each of a different colour. From the milk which dripped from her body, sprang the living corn, so from the beginning the grain and the buffalo meat were decreed to be the food of the Indians. She gave to the rival factions, the pipe which was the sacred calumet, instructing them that it was the symbol of peace among men and he who smoked it with his fellows, by

that act sealed the bond of brotherhood. After staying for awhile among the grateful people, and teaching them to call her "Grandmother," which is a term of affectionate reverence among the Indians, she led them to plentiful herds of her own kind and vanished into the spiritland whence she came.

The odour of the buffalo was believed to be agreeable to the Great Spirit so that the tobacco or kinnikinick of the calumet was flavoured with animal's excrement in order that the aroma wafted upward might be most pleasing. This custom of flavouring the pipe with the scent of the buffalo was carefully observed by the Pawnee Loups of the olden time, a tribe which claimed descent from the ancient Mexicans, in the awful ceremonies preceding a human sacrifice to Venus, the "Great Star." Upon this austere occasion four great buffalo skulls were placed within the lodge where the celebration was held and they were offered the sacred

nawishkaro or calumet. The bodies of their chiefs or those who died gloriously in war were robed in buffalo skins, furnished with food and weapons, and placed sitting upright, in a little lodge near a route of travel or a camp in order that the passers by might see that they had met their death with honour. The Pawnees also used bison skulls as signals, and we find in James' *Travels* this interesting account:

"At a little distance in front of the entrance of this breastwork, was a semi-circular row of sixteen bison skulls, with their noses pointing down the river. Near the center of the circle which this row would describe if continued, was another skull marked with a number of red lines.

"Our interpreter informed us that this arrangement of skulls and other marks here discovered, were designed to communicate the following information, namely, that the camp had been occupied by a war party of the Pawnee Loup In-

dians, who had lately come from an excursion against the Cumancias, Tetans or some of the Western tribes. The number of red lines traced on the painted skull indicated the number of the party to have been thirty-six; the position in which the skulls were placed, that they were on their return to their own country. Two small rods stuck in the ground, with a few hairs tied in two parcels to the end of each signified that four scalps had been taken."

There are many other similar instances recorded by different adventurers who braved the early West, yet this was but one of numerous uses of buffalo skulls and heads. Among the Aricaras upon each lodge was a trophy of the war path or the chase composed of strangely painted buffalo heads topped with all kinds of weapons.

There was a curious belief among the Minitarees that the bones of the buffalo killed in the chase became rehabilitated

with flesh and lived again, to be hunted the following year. In support of this superstition they had a legend that once upon a time on a great hunt a boy of the tribe was lost. His people gave him up for dead but the succeeding season a huge bison was slain and when the body was opened the boy stepped out alive and well. He related to his dumbfounded companions, how the year before, he had become separated from them as he pursued a splendid bull. He felled his game with an arrow, but so far had he gone that it was too late to overtake and rejoin the tribe before nightfall. Therefore, he cut into the bison's body, removed a portion of the intestines and feeling the keen frost of evening upon his unsheltered body, sought warmth within the carcass. But, lo! when the boy awakened the buffalo was whole again and he was a prisoner within his whilom prey!

The Gros Ventres, in the day of Lewis and Clark, thought that if the head of the

slain buffalo were treated well, the living herd would come in plentiful numbers to yield an abundance of meat.

Of the many bands into which the Omawhaw nation was divided there were two, the *Ta-pa-eta-je* and the *Ta-sin-da,* bison tail, which had the buffalo for their medicine. The first of these were sworn to abstain from touching buffalo heads, and the second were forbidden the flesh of the calves until the young animals were more than one year old. If these vows were broken by a member of the band and the sacred pledge so violated, a judgment such as blindness, white hair or disease was believed to be sent upon the offender. Even should one innocently transgress the law, a visitation of sickness was accounted his condign portion and not only he but his family were included in the wrath and punishment of the outraged Manitous.

The Crow Indians, Up-sa-ro-ka, or Absaroka, used the buffalo as a part of

their great medicine. An early traveller, Dougherty, describes an extraordinary "arrangement of the magi." In his own words, "the upper portion of a cotton-wood tree was emplanted with its base in the earth, and around it was a sweat house, the upper part of the top of the tree arising through the roof. A *gray* bison skin, extended with oziers on the inside so as to exhibit a natural appearance, was suspended above the house, and on the branches were attached several pairs of children's moccasins and leggings, and from one limb of the tree, a very large fan made of war-eagles' feathers was dependent."

This leads to an interesting superstition of the Indians, which was that any variation in the usual colour of the buffalo was caused by the special interference of the Master of Life, and a beast so distinguished from his kind was venerated religiously, much as the ancient Egyptians worshipped the sacred bull. Once a

"grayish-white" bison was seen and upon another occasion a calf with white fore-feet and a white frontal mark. An early traveller once saw in an Indian lodge, the head of a buffalo perfectly preserved, which was marked by a white star. The man to whom it belonged treasured it as his medicine, nor would he part with it at any price.

"'The herds come every season,' he said, 'into the vicinity to seek their white-faced companion!'"

Maximilian, in his *Travels in North America,* gives an interesting description of the martial and sacred significance of the robes of white buffalo cows among the Mandans and Minitarees. He says that the brave who has never possessed this emblem is without honour, and the merest youth who has obtained it ranks above the most venerable patriarch who has never owned the precious hide. Indeed, "of all the distinctions of any man the white buffalo hide" was supreme. As

the white buffalo were extremely rare it was seldom a hunter killed one for himself. The robes were brought by other tribes, often from far distant parts of the country, to the Mandans who traded from ten to fifteen horses for a perfect specimen. It was necessary for the hide to be that of a young cow not more than two years old, and it had to be cured "with the horns, nose, hoofs and tail" complete, In Maximilian's words: "The Mandans have peculiar ceremonies at the dedication of the hide. As soon as they have obtained it they engage an eminent medicine man, who must throw it over him; he then walks around the village in the apparent direction of the sun's course, and sings a medicine song. When the owner, after collecting articles of value for three or four years, desires to offer his treasure to the lord of life, or to the first man, he rolls it up, after adding some wormwood or a head of maize, and the skin then remains suspended on a high pole till it rots

away. At the time of my visit there was such an offering at *Mih-Tutta-Hang-Kush,* near the stages for the dead without the village. Sometimes, when the ceremony of dedication is finished, the hide is cut into small strips, and the members of the family wear parts of it tied over the head, or across the forehead, when they are in full dress. If a Mandan kills a young white buffalo cow it is accounted to him as more than an exploit, or having killed an enemy. He does not cut up the animal himself, but employs another man, to whom he gives a horse for his trouble. He alone who has killed such an animal is allowed to wear a narrow strip of the skin in his ears. The whole robe is not ornamented, being esteemed superior to any other dress, however fine. The traders have, sometimes, sold such hides to the Indians, who gave them as many as sixty other robes in exchange. Buffalo skins with white spots are likewise highly valued by the Man-

dans; but there is a race of these animals with very soft, silky hair, which has a beautiful gold lustre when in the sunshine; these are, likewise, highly prized."

There are numerous myths of a white buffalo cow, who at will, assumed the form of a beautiful maiden.

The Sioux in common with the Aricaras and the Minitarees observed the custom of fasting before going to war or upon the hunt. They had a "medicine lodge," where a buffalo robe was spread and a red painted post was planted. Upon the top of the lodge was tied a buffalo calf skin holding various sacred objects. After preliminary rites they tortured themselves, one favorite method being to make a gash under their shoulder blades, run cords through the wounds and drag two large bison heads to a hill about a mile distant from their village, where they danced until they fell fainting with exhaustion.

Some of the tribes performed the *Ta-*

nuguh-wat-che, or bison dance. The participants were painted black, wore a head dress made of the skin of a buffalo head which was cut after the fashion of a cap. It was adjusted in a manner to resemble a live animal, and extending from this head dress, over the half-naked and blackened bodies of the dancers, depended a long strip of hide from the back of the buffalo which hung down like a tail.

The Omawhaws believed that the Great Wahconda appeared sometimes in the shape of a bison bull and they, like other tribes, cherished legends of a fabulous age when animals spoke together, did battle and possessed intelligence equal to that of men. The following myth of the bison bull, the ant and the tortoise, related by James, is an interesting example of these fables:

Once upon a time an ant, a tortoise and a buffalo bull formed themselves into a war party and determined to attack

the village of an enemy in the vicinity. They decided in council that the tortoise being sluggish and slow of movement, should start in advance and the ant and bull should time their departure so as to overtake him on the way. This plan was adopted and the awkward tortoise floundered forth on his hostile mission alone. In due time the bison bull took the ant upon his back, lest on account of his minuteness he be lost, and together they set out for the enemy's country. At length they came to a treacherous bog where they found the poor tortoise struggling vainly to free himself. This caused the ant and the bull much merriment as they crossed safely to solid ground. But the tortoise, scorning to ask the aid of his brothers in war, replied cheerfully to their taunts and insisted that he would meet them at the hostile village.

The ant and the bison advanced with noise and bravado and the watchful enemy perceiving them, issued from their

lodges and wounded both, driving them to headlong, inglorious retreat.

Finally the tortoise with sore travail, reached his destination to find his companions flown, and because he could not flee also, he fell into the hands of the foe —a prisoner. These cruel people decided to put him to death at once. They threatened him with slow roasting in red coals of fire, with boiling and many awful tortures, but the astute tortoise expressed his willingness to suffer any of these penalties. Therefore the enemy consulted together again and held over his head the fate of drowning. Against this he protested with such frenzied vehemence that his captors immediately executed the sentence, and bearing him to a deep part of the river which flowed through their country, flung him in. Thus restored to his native element he plunged to the bottom of the stream, then arose to the surface to see his enemies gaping from the bank in expectation of his agony. He

grabbed several of them, dragged them down and killed them, and appeared once more triumphantly displaying their scalps to the bewildered multitude of thwarted warriors who were helpless to avenge their brethren. The tortoise, satisfied with his achievement, returned to his home where he found the ant and the bull prone upon the floor of the lodge, wounded, humbled and fordone. * * *

Finally, the Minitarees and other tribes had a curious legend of their origin. They believed that their forefathers once dwelt in dark, subterranean caverns, beyond a great, swift-running river. Two youths disappeared from amongst them and after a short absence returned to proclaim that they had found a land lighted by an orb which warmed the earth to fecundity, where deep waters shimmered crystal white and countless herds of bison covered grass and flower-decked plains. So the youths led the people up out of the primal darkness into the

pleasant valleys where they dwelt evermore. And as the bison were celebrated in this child-like tradition of the Beginning, so likewise, did they figure in the primitive conception of the hereafter. That region of Summer where the good Indian should find repose, was pictured as an ideal country, fair with verdure and rich with herds of buffalo which the good spirits would go seeking through the golden vistas of eternity.

IV

When the first explorers penetrated the fastnesses of the New World the buffalo was lord of the continent. Coronado on his march northward from Mexico saw hordes of these unknown beasts which a chronicler of 1600 described naïvely as "crooked-backed oxen." The mighty herds roamed through the blue grass of Kentucky, the Carolinas, that region now the state of New York, and probably

every favorable portion of North America. Very gradually they were pushed farther and farther westward to the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains, which was for many years their refuge and retreat. In 1819 the official expedition sent by John C. Calhoun to examine the Rocky Mountains, their tribes, animal and plant life, found the buffalo reduced in numbers, though in the wild stretches of country lying South along the Arkansas, they were seen in countless hordes. The report says:

"During these few days past, the bisons have occurred in vast and almost continuous herds, and in such infinite numbers as seemed to indicate the great bend of the Arkansas as their chief and general rendezvous."

The account continues to narrate how the scent of the white men borne to the farthest animal, a distance of two miles, started the multitudes speeding away, and

yet so limitless were those millions, that, day after day, they flowed past like a sea until their presence became as a part of the landscape, and by night their thunderous bellow echoed through the savage wastes.

In Bradbury's *Travels* there is a description of a fight among buffalo bulls. He says:

"On my return to the boats, as the wind had in some degree abated, we proceeded and had not gone more than five or six miles before we were surprised by a dull, hollow sound, the cause of which we could not possibly imagine. It seemed to be one or two miles below us; but as our descent was rapid, it increased every moment in loudness, and before we had proceeded far, our ears were able to catch some distinct tones, like the bellowing of buffaloes. When opposite to the place from whence it proceeded, we landed, ascended the bank, and entered a small skirting of trees and shrubs, that sep-

arated the river from an extensive plain. On gaining a view of it, such a scene opened to us as will fall to the lot of few travellers to witness. This plain was literally covered with buffaloes as far as we could see, and we soon discovered that it consisted in part of females. The males were fighting in every direction, with a fury which I have never seen paralleled, each having singled out his antagonist. We judged that the number must have amounted to some thousands, and that there were many hundreds of these battles going on at the same time, some not eighty yards from us. The noise occasioned by the trampling and bellowing was far beyond description."

At that time the bison paths were like well trodden roadways and served as such to the explorers. These paths always led by most direct routes to fresh water, and therefore were of the greatest assistance to travellers unacquainted with the undiscovered lands.

Such were the legions of the plains even when the East had refused them shelter. And although it was roughly estimated that the tribes dwelling along the Missouri River killed yearly 100,000 for food, saddle covers and clothes, this did not appreciably lessen their hosts. Not until the white tide flowed faster and faster over the wilds was the doom of the buffalo sounded, together with that of the forests which sheltered them, and the Indians who were at once their foes and their friends.

Then the destruction was swift beyond belief. The royal game which Coronado saw in 1585, which Lewis and Clark in their adventurous journey into the unknown West encountered at every turn, was nearly gone. They endured in such numbers that as late as 1840 Father De Smet said:

"The scene realized in some sort the ancient tradition of the holy scriptures, speaking of the vast pastoral countries of

the Orient, and of the cattle upon a thousand hills."

It was inconceivable to the Indians that civilization should wreak such utter desolation. They could not comprehend the passing of the mighty herds any more than they could appreciate the destruction of the forests or their own decline. They did not know that the railroad which traversed the highway of the plains between the East and West ran through miles upon miles of country whitened with buffalo bones; that veritably the prairies which had been the pasture of the herds were now become their graveyard —a graveyard of unburied dead. They did not know that armies of workingmen and settlers had drawn upon the buffalo for food and warmth, that the beasts had been harried and hunted North, South, East and West, sometimes legitimately, but too often in cruel, wanton sport, until, at last, it became an evident fact that they were visibly nearing their end. A kind

of stampede possessed the terrified beasts. Their old haunts were usurped. Where the fostering forests had given them shelter, towns arose. Baffled and dismayed they fled, hither and thither, only to crash headlong within the range of the huntsman's gun. So they charged at random, ever pressed closer and closer to bay by the encroaching life which was their death.

About the year of 1883 it was known that the last thinned and vagrant remnant of the buffalo was virtually gone. Maddened into desperate bewilderment they had done an unprecedented thing. Instead of going northward as their habit had been since man first observed their kind, they turned and fled South. This was their end. The half-breeds of the Red River, the Sioux of the Missouri, and most relentless of all, the white hide-hunter, beset the wild, retreating band. Their greed spared neither beast that tottered with age, nor calf fresh from its

mother's womb. All fell prey to the mastering greed of the lords of the great free land.

Upon the shores of the Cannonball River, so-called from the heaps of round stones upon its banks, on the edge of the Dakotas, the buffalo made their last stand. Driven to bay they stood and fell together, the latest offspring of a vanished race.

But the poor Indian, he who had shared the freedom of the continent with his horned friend, could not yet understand that the buffalo were gone—gone as the sheltering woods were going, even as he, himself, must go. Evolution is cruel as well as beneficent and there is a pang for each poor, lesser existence crushed out in the race, as there is joy in the survival of the strongest and best. And those who are superior to-day must themselves be superseded to-morrow and fall into the abysmal yesterday, mere stepping stones toward the Infinite. The

Indians, knowing none of these things, became troubled and perplexed. In vain they sought the herds on their old-time hunting grounds, but only stark, bleached bones were there and they went back to their lodges, hungry, gaunt and wan.

In years past the buffalo had disappeared at intervals to unknown pastures, then returned multiplied and reinforced. Was it not possible that they had gone upon such a journey, perhaps to the ultimate North where the Old Man dwelt, to seek refuge in a mighty polar cave under his benign protection? So from their meager stores the Indians offered sacrifices of horses and other of their most valued possessions, to the Old Man, that he might drive the buffalo back to the deserted pasture lands near the Rocky Mountains.

"They are tired," said Long Tree of the Sioux, "with much running. They have had no rest. They have been chased and chased over the rocks and gravel of

the prairie and their feet are sore, worn down, like those of a tender-footed horse. When the buffalo have rested and their feet have grown out again, they will return to us in larger numbers, stronger, with better robes and fatter than they ever were."

Still the years passed and the buffalo came not, and some there were who said that if the Old Man, the Great Spirit of the North, loved his children of the forest, he would not have left them to suffer so painfully and long.

Then out of dumb despair came sudden hope; out of the bitter silence sounded a Voice and a prophet came "preaching through the wilderness," even as John the Baptist had come, centuries ago, bringing a message of peace and the promise of salvation. This prophet was *Wovoka*, founder of the Ghost Dance religion, who arose in "the land of the setting sun," in the shadow of the Sierras. He told the wrapt people that when "the sun

died" he went to heaven where he saw God, the spirits of those long dead and vast herds of revivified buffalo feeding in the pastures of the skies. Heaven would not be perfect to the Indian without the buffalo, and the red man, less jealous than ourselves of his paradise, was willing to share the bliss of immortality with his old-time companions of the plains. The tenets of the new creed were gentle, teaching peace, truth, honesty and universal brotherhood. Under the thrall of the Ghost Dance, devotees dropped to earth insensible and had visions of the spirit-world. Wovoka prophesied that at the appointed time the ghostly legions, led by a spirit captain, would descend from heaven, striking down the unbelievers and restoring to the Indians and the buffalo dominion over the earth.

With the awful desperation of a last hope the Indians leaped high into the Night surrounding them to grasp at a star —a star, alas! which proved to be but a

will-o'-the-wisp set over a quagmire of death. Nothing seemed impossible to their excited fancy. Had not the white race killed the Christ upon a Cross of torture, and would he not come to earth again as an Indian, to gather his children together in everlasting happiness when the grass should be green with the Spring? Meantime they must dance, dance through the weary days and nights in order that the prophesy might be fulfilled.

An alarm spread through the country. What meant this frenzied dance of circling, whirling mystics who strained with wide eyes to look beyond the skies? An order came that the dance must cease. This decree was but human, the one which bade them dance they believed to be divine. And dance they did, wildly, madly, to the sharp time of musketry until the hurrying feet were stilled and the dancers lay cold and stark on the field of Wounded Knee.

In all the annals of the Indians' tragic tale there is nothing more pitiful than this Dance of Death. The poor victims, together with the last hope of a despairing race, were buried at Wounded Knee, and the white man wrought his will.

Slowly and steadily the woods were laid low, inevitably the Indians retreated farther and farther back, closer pressed, routed as the buffalo had been. All hope of the return of the beloved herds left their hearts and they knew at last that they would find them only in those Elysian fields of perpetual summertime—the Happy Hunting Ground.

V

The sun set red behind the mountains. The shadows stole down, gray and mystical as ghosts. From afar the coyote's dolorous cry plained through the silence and the owl hooted dismally as he awakened at the approach of night. There in

the pallid dusk lay the bleached skull and the arrowhead of black obsidian, mute reliques of the past. The royal buffalo is no more, the hunter that hurled the bolt is gone. We may find the inferior offspring of the one in city parks, of the other on ever-lessening reservations, but degeneracy is more pitiful than death, and the old, free herds that ranged the continent are past as the fleet-footed, strong-hearted tribes have vanished from the plains.

So the story of the two fallen races is told eloquently by this whitened skull on the hillside and the jet-black arrow head flung by the stilled red hand.

LAKE McDONALD & ITS TRAIL

CHAPTER VII

LAKE McDONALD AND ITS TRAIL

IN the northern part of Montana, towards the Canadian border, the Main Range of the Rocky Mountains has been rent and carved by glacial action during ages gone by, until the peaks, like tusks, stand separate and distinct in a mighty, serrated line. No one of these reaches so great a height as Shasta, Rainier or Hood, but here the huge, horned spine rises almost sheer from the sweep of tawny prairie, and not one, but hosts of pinnacles, sharp as lances, stand clean cut against the sky. Approaching the range from the East, in the saffron glow of sunset, one might fancy it was wrought of amethyst, so intense and pure is the colour, so clear and true the minutest de-

tail of the grandly sculptured outline. Within the ice-locked barriers of those heights live glaciers still grind their passages through channels of stone; down in shadowy ravines, voiceful with silver-tongued falls, lie fair lakes in the embrace of over-shadowing altitudes. The largest of these lakes, McDonald, is the heart of a vast and marvelous country, the center of many trails.

The road to Lake McDonald winds along the shores of the Flathead River for half a mile or more, skirting the swift current now churned into white foam by rapids, then calm and transparent, revealing the least stone and tress of moss in its bed, in shades of limpid emerald. Leaving the river, the way lies through dense forests of pine and tamarack, cedar and spruce, and so closely do the spreading boughs interlace that the sun falls but slightly, in quivering, pale gold splashes upon the pads of moss and the fragrant damp mold which bursts

into brilliant orange-coloured fungus and viciously bright toadstools. Each fallen log, each boulder wrested from its place and hurled down by glacier or avalanche, is dressed in a faery garb of moss and tiny, fragrant shell-pink bells called twinflowers, because two blossoms, perfect twins, always hang pendent from a single stem as slender as spun glass, and these small bells scent the air with an odour as sweet as heliotrope. Within the forest dim with perpetual twilight, one feels the vastness of great spaces, the silence of great solitudes.

Suddenly there bursts upon one, with all the up-bearing exhilaration of a first sight of the sea, a scene which, once engraved upon the heart, will remain forever. The trees part like a curtain drawn aside and the distance opens magnificently. The intense blue of the cloudless sky arches overhead, the royal waters of the lake flow blue and green with the colours of a peacock's tail or the variegated

beauty of an abalone shell; sweeping upward from the shores are tall, timbered hills, so thickly sown with pine that each tree seems but a spear of grass and the whole forest but a lawn, and towering beyond, yet seeming very near in the pure, white light, is a host of peaks silvered with the benediction of the clouds—the deathless snow. The haze that tints their base is of a shade one sometimes finds in violets, in amethysts, in dreams. Indeed, these mountains seem to descend from heaven to earth rather than to soar from earth towards heaven, so great is their sublimity.

As one floats away on the lake the view changes. New vistas open and close, new peaks appear above and beyond as though their legion would never come to an end. Straight ahead two irregular, rugged mountains with roots of stone emplanted in the water, rise like a mighty portal, and between the two, seeming to bridge them, is a ridge called the "Garden Wall." The

detail of the more immediate steeps grows distinct and we see from their naked crests down their timbered sides, deep furrows, the tracks of avalanches which have rushed from the snow fields of Winter, uprooting trees and crushing them in the fury of the mad descent. A long, comparatively level stretch, not unlike a gun sight set among the bristling, craggy summits, is the "Gunsight Pass," the difficult way to the Great St. Mary's Lakes, the Blackfeet Glacier and the wonderful, remote region on the Eastern slope of the range. Huge, white patches mark glaciers and snow fields, for it is within these same mountains that the Piegan (Sperry) and many others lie. And as we drift on and on across the smooth expanse of water, the magic of it steals upon our souls. For there is about the lake a charm apart from the beauty of the waters and the glory of the peaks; of spirit rather than substance; of soul-essence rather than earthly form. That

mysterious force, whatever it may be, rising from the water and the forest solitudes and descending from the mountain tops, flows into our veins with the amber sunshine and we feel the sweeping uplift of altitudes heaven-aspiring that take us back through infinite ages to the Source which is Nature and God.

The good old captain of the little craft weaves fact and fancy into wonderful yarns as he steers his launch straight for the long, purplish-green point which is the landing. To him no ocean greyhound is more seaworthy than his boat, and he likes to tell of timid tender-feet entreating him to keep to shore when the lake was tumultuous with storm, and how he, spurning danger, guided them all safely through the trough of the waves. He keeps a little log wherein each passenger is asked to write his name. The poor old man has a maimed hand, his eyes are filmy with years and his gums are all but toothless, but it would seem that nature

Glacier Camp

has compensated him for his afflictions by concentrating his whole strength in his tongue. He knows each landmark well, and gravely points out to the credulous traveller, the highest mountain in the world; calls attention to the 18,000 fathoms of lake depth whence no drowned man ever rises, and other marvels, each the greatest of its kind upon the circumference of the globe. There came a day soon after when the lake chafed beneath a lashing gale and the little craft and her gallant captain were dumped ingloriously upon the beach. But accidents happen to the best of seamen, and the launch, after a furious expulsion of steam, and much hiccoughing, was dragged once more into her place upon the wave.

Although there is evidence that Lake McDonald was long ago frequented by some of the Indian tribes, it was not known to the world until comparatively recent times. There are two stories of its discovery and naming, both of which

have a foundation of truth. The first is that Sir John McDonald, the famous Canadian politician, riding across the border with a party, cut a trail through the pathless woods and happening to penetrate to the lake, blazed his name upon a tree to commemorate the event, thus linking his fame with the newly found natural treasure. The old trail remains —probably the virgin way into the wilderness. The second story—which is from the lips of Duncan McDonald, son of Angus, runs thus: He and a little band of Selish were crossing from their own land of the Jocko into the country of the Blackfeet which lies East of the Main Range, to recover some ponies stolen by the latter tribe, when they came in view of this lake hitherto unknown to them. Duncan McDonald, who was the leader or *partizan,* as the French-Canadians say, blazed the name "McDonald" upon some pines along the shore. It matters little who was actually the first to set foot on

these unpeopled banks, but it is a strange coincidence that the two pathfinders should have borne the same name.

The purplish-green point draws nearer, log cabins appear among the trees, each one decorated with a bear skin hung near its door. This is a fur trading center as well as a resort of nature lovers, and upon the broad porch of the club house is a heap of pelts of silver tip, black and brown bear, mountain lion and lynx, and from the walls within, bighorn sheep and mountain goats' heads peer down. The trappers themselves, quaint, old hunters of the wilderness, come out of their retreats to trade. But even now their day is passing. With the advent of outside life these characters, scarcely less shy than the game they seek, move farther back into uncontaminated solitudes. They are the last, lingering fragment of that old West which is so nearly a sad, sweet memory, a loving regret.

Each hour of the day traces its lapse in

light and shadow on the lake, until the sunset flowing in a copper tide, draws aureoles of golden cloud over the white-browed peaks, transforming their huge and rugged bulk into luminous light-giving bodies of faded roses and lavender. As the evening wanes the mountains burn out in ashes of roses, still lightened here and there upon their ultimate heights, with a glow as faint as the memory of a dead love, and the living halo of the clouds deepens into coral crowns. Then the lake becomes a vast opal, kindling with fires that flash and die in the growing dusk.

The dark forests that cloak the lake shores, are threaded with trails each leading to some treasure store of Nature far off in the secrecy of the hills. One of great beauty starts from the head of the lake, beneath the shadow of the mountains, and overhangs the boisterous, rock-rent torrent of McDonald's Creek. The narrow way is padded thick with pine

needles ground into sweet, brown powder which deadens the least intrusive footfall, as though the whole wood were harkening to the singing of the waters through the silence of the trees. Along the trail are mosses of multitudinous kinds. The delicate star moss unfolds its feathery points of green; a strange variety with thick, mottled leaves grows like a full blown rose around decayed trees, and a small, pale, gray-green trumpet-shaped moss rears hosts of elfin horns. Only a skilled botanist could classify these rich carpets which Nature has spread over the dead royalty of her forests, so that even in their death there is resurrection; even in their decay, new life. Bluebells and twinflowers, those delicate faery-bells of pink, sweet grass, pigeon berry and many another blossom beautiful in its strangeness, weave their colour into gay patterns on the green; blend their fragrance with the balsam sweetness of the woods. And all around, the stately pine trees grow

bearded with long, gray moss which marks their antiquity and foretells their doom. The stream below, flowing between steep banks that it has cut during centuries of ceaseless washing, raises its song to a roar as it flings its swift current over a parapet of stone in a banner of shimmering, white foam. Above, the water breaks in whirling rapids and farther still is another fall. Towering in the distance is an exalted peak, the father of this stream, whose snowy gift pours down its perennial blessing into the clear tide of the lake.

So it is, the streams that issue from the glaciers yield their pure tribute to Lake McDonald, and all the trails, uncoiling their devious and dizzy ways over the mountains, bring us back to these shores. And every time that we return it breaks upon us with renewed freshness of mood. It may be ridden by a wind that lashes it into running waves of purple and wine colour, marked with the white foot-prints

of the gale. It may be still as the first thought of love, holding in its broad mirror the bending sky and mountains peering into its secrecy. It may be ephemeral with mist that dims the mountains into pale, shadowy ghosts; or it may be like a voluptuous beauty glittering with jewels and clad in robes of silken sheen; again, it may be Quakerish in its pallid monotone. The changing cycle of the day and night each brings its different gift of beauty, and likewise, the passing seasons deck the mountains and the waters with a glory all their own, until, with martial hosts of cloud, with banners streaming silver and emblazoned with lightning-gleam, Winter spreads its garment of white upon the mystery of the wild. Perhaps the lake is never so exquisite as then. At least it seems so, as with closed eyes and passive soul, a memory undimmed arises out of the past.

It is night in the dead of Winter. The silence of deep sleep and isolation is on

the world. The snow has fallen like a flock of white birds and the air has cleared to the degree of scintillating brilliance that mocks the diamond's flash. The full moon is beneath a cloud and its veiled light, filtering through the vapor, shows dimly the shadowy waters and the wan peaks fainting far away. Then the cloud passes. The moon leaps into the heavens and a flood of white light illumines the water, the sky and the mountains, transforming the whole into a faery scene of arctic splendour. It is as though the last breath of life had vanished in that chaste frozen atmosphere, and the earth had become a Palace of Dreams.

And though that Palace of Dreams vanishes as dreams must, like a melting snow crystal or a frosty sigh upon the night, there remains in our hearts a yearning which shall bear us back to the reality of beauty that rewards each pilgrim who returns to the deathless glory of the mountain-married lake.

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

CHAPTER VIII

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

OF all the trails in the McDonald country, there is none more travelled, or more worthy of the toil than that which leads to the Piegan glacier. From the moment we stand in expectant readiness in the little clearing behind the log cabins comprising the hotel, a new phase of existence has begun for us. So strange are the place and the conditions that it seems we must have stepped back fifty years or more, into that West whose glamour lives in story and song. Strong, tanned, sinewy guides who wear cartridge belts and six-shooters, load grunting pack-horses and "throw" diamond-hitches in businesslike silence. When at last all is ready, the riders mount the Indian ponies or "cayuses"—

Allie Sand, the yellow cow pony; Babe, the slumbrous; Bunchie, but recently subdued, and Baldy, nicknamed "Foolish" because of the musical pack of kettles, camp stoves and sundries that jingle and jump up and down upon his back, lightening the way with merriment for those who follow. With a quickened beating of the heart, the good cheer and Godspeed of friendly voices ringing in our ears, we take leave of the last haunt of civilization and strike out into the virgin solitude of heaven-aspiring peaks.

As the feeling of remoteness smites the spirit when we pass beyond the railway station of Belton and follow in creaking wagons the shadow-curtained road to the lake, so now it returns with stronger impulse, calling to life new emotions begotten of the Wild. The world-rush calms into the great stillness of untrodden places, the world-voices sigh out in the murmuring breeze, the petty traffic of the cities is forgotten in the soulful si-

lence of the trees. And out of this newly found affinity with the Nature forces, the love of adventure thrills into being, together with the fine scorn of danger and the resolve to do that which we set out to do no matter what the cost or the peril. Here the "white feather" is the greatest badge of dishonour, and he who fails through cowardice to win his goal is a man among men no more. This spirit is the faint, far-off echo of the hero-bearing days of the early West.

Our guide is a stocky, little man of soldierly bearing, clad in khaki suit and cow-boy hat, whom his fellows call "Scotty." He is brown with exposure, smoothly shaven, and his keen, blue eyes are slightly contracted at the corners from the strain of peering through vast distances—a characteristic of men who follow woodcraft and hunting. He rides ahead silently but for a rebuke to the slumbrous "Babe," such as, "Go on, you lazy coyote," or a familiar, half-caress-

ing remark to Bunchie, the ex-outlaw, who is his favourite. Indeed, he, like most men who have ridden the range, has the habit of talking to the ponies as though they knew and understood. And who can be sure they do not?

The forests begin as soon as the bit of clearing is passed, then single file the little cavalcade moves on through huckleberry fields, purplish-black with luscious, ripe berries, where bears come to feed and fatten, where, also, thirsty wayfarers stop to eat the juicy fruit. The pines clasp branches overhead in a lacy, broken roof whose pattern of needle and burr shows in dark traceries against patches of blue sky remote and far beyond. A thick, sweet shadow dappled now and again with splashes of yellow sun tempers the air which presses its cool touch upon our brows. On either hand a dense, even lawn of tender green fern and mist-maiden covers the earth and through the silence sounds the merry clamour of a

stream. It ripples gaily along between wooded banks, breaking into little crests of foam upon the rocks, showing through the glassy medium of its waters, every stone and pebble of its speckled bed polished and rounded by ceaseless flowing. The horses splash through the creek and upon the opposite side begins anew the delicate lawn of mist-maiden and fern, so freshly, tenderly green with the pale greenness of things that live away from the sun, so ephemerally exquisite as to embarrass coarse, mortal presence. It is a spot fit for fairies to dance upon; fit for wood-nymphs and white hinds to make merry in; fit for the flute-like melody of Pan to awake to dancing echoes as he calls the forest sprites unto high revelry.

A forest ranger joins us. He is tramping to the Gunsight Pass with his axe upon his shoulder and his kit upon his back, to repair the trail to the Great St. Mary's Lakes.

The shades of brown and green, the

shadow threaded with an occasional strand of gold, are livened by crimson patches of Indian Paint Brush, bluebells, white starry lilies called Queen's Cups, trembling feathers of coral pink, sun-yellow and white syringa. Beneath the overhanging verdure, around and upon the mossy rocks, the ever-present twin-flowers open their delicate petals and sweeten the air, and from clumps of coarse grass rise cones of minute white blossoms, the bear-grass, one of the most curious of the mountain flowers. This ranger knows the common names of nearly all the plants, and at every turn new varieties spring up. He stops to gather each kind of bloom until we have a great bouquet—a *potpourri* of all the floral beauty of the multitudes that people our path.

The way is very fair, ministering to the senses; troops of new, forest forms and colours pass before the eye, the mingled sweets of the flowers, the pungent

mould and balsam of spruce and pine breathe sensuously into the nostrils, and the fingers of the wind caress and soothe as they pass. Through the voiceful silence, sounds that are on the borderland between fancy and reality, thrill for a moment, then are lost in the grand chorus of trees and rushing rivers. A stream of volume and velocity flowing through a deep gorge falls twice in its downward rush. These two falls, the Wynona and Minneopa, flash great, white plumes among steeps of green forest.

With sharp descent and stubborn climb, the trail, that seems the merest thread, untangles its skein and leads, at length, into a small basin partly enclosed within sheer, naked rock-walls, whence three delicate silver streams trickle down and join the creek that waters a little park. Beyond, the peaks loom up masterfully, sheathing their icy lances in the clouds. High over the lip of the mighty rock-wall, rising like the giant counterpart of

an ancient battlement, lies the glacier. Up that precipitous, overhanging parapet we must make our way, but where the footing or how the ascent is to be won, fancy cannot fathom, for it would seem no living thing save a mountain goat, a bighorn sheep or an eagle could scale this stronghold of Nature. Across the basin, where there is a gentler slope, the mountain side is dotted with groups of tall, spire-like pines. The level meadow is grassy and shaded with small spruce of the size of Christmas trees. And in this peaceful spot, girt with grim, challenging steeps, the tinkle of the stream sounds pastorally sweet, while the more distant and powerful roar of the three tumbling streams chants a solemn undertone to the merry lilt.

Here the camp is made. A fire crackles gaily and our tents are pitched beneath the trees. Suddenly a shadow falls,—dimly, almost imperceptibly. The sun has gone. It is only six o'clock in mid-

summer, but so lofty are the barrier-heights that even now we are in a world of shade,—shade of a strangely luminous kind, hinting of ruddy lights that are obscured but not quenched. Through the quiet, echo the whistle of the marmot, the metallic whirr of contentious squirrels going off like small alarm clocks, and the mellow, drowsy note of bells ringing to the rhythmic crop of browsing ponies. So the long beautiful twilight settles over the mountains until the sounds are stilled save the tinkling bells and the water-voices singing their ceaseless song. The forest sleeps. Long, mystical fancy-bearing moments and tens of moments pass, and something of awe closes down with the gloaming. Then through the dim, monkish grey shadow pulses a red-gold stream of light that runs in long, uneven streamers across the face of the grim, dark walls, transfiguring them into radiant shapes of living golden-rose. In that effulgence of glory, lost peaks gleam for

a second out of the dusk and vanish into nothingness again, snowy diadems flash into being and fade like a dream. The life-blood of the day ebbs and flows, sending out long, slender fingers to trace its fleeting message on the rocks, then with a deepening, crimson glow it flickers and is fled. Night settles fast and the flare of the camp fire, shedding its spark-spangles in brilliant showers, reclaims one little spot from the devouring blackness. It is a magical thing—this campfire, and the living ring around it is an enchanted circle. Perhaps its warmth penetrates even to the heart, or perhaps the bond of human fellowship asserts itself more strongly when only the precarious, flamboyant fire-light, leaping and waning, throwing forth a rain of sparks, or searing grey with sudden decline, separates our little group from utter desolation. Whatever the charm may be, it falls upon us all, and with eyes fixed on the ember-pictures or raised to the starry

skies, we listen to tales of the long ago and of a present as unfamiliar as the past. The reserve of our guide is quite broken and he tells in a low, reminiscent voice, of wonder-spots in the range,—for he knows its every peak and gorge,—of the animals that dwell in its solitary recesses and of how the Piegan Glacier got its name.

The Piegan Indians are a branch of the Blackfeet tribe, and in the early days they were almost as noted horse raiders as the Absarokes who flourished near the Three Tetons, in the country of the Yellowstone. Back and forth across the passes they came and went in their nefarious traffic, secure from pursuit among the horns of these lonely heights. The vicinity of the eternal ice-fields, probably this little basin itself, sheltered the shadowy bands, and thus the glacier became known by their name. Still, you may look in vain on the maps for Piegan Glacier; you will find it called Sperry instead.

The old name was discarded for that of a Professor who spent some weeks exploring its crevasses and under whose supervision a corps of college students spent a part of one summer's vacation, building the glacier trail. Yet there are those who love the old names as they love the traditions for which they stand, and to them the glacier will forever bear the time-honoured title of these Indians who have long since disappeared from its solitudes.

As the hours pass we draw from our guide and story-teller something of himself. Little by little, in fragmentary allusions and always incidentally, during that even-tide and the days following, we learn thus much of his life. He was born in those troublous days of Indian fighting on the frontier, shortly after his father, an army officer, was ordered out on campaign against the Sioux. When he was but a few weeks old word came to his mother that her husband had been killed,

and she, sick and heart-broken, died, leaving besides this infant one other boy. The two children were left to the care of the officers at Fort Kehoe, but they were separated while both were so young that they did not realize the parting nor remember each other. Our guide became the ward of a lieutenant who had been a friend of his father. He played among the soldiers and Indian scouts at the Fort until he came to the age when he felt the desire to learn, then he went East to school, afterwards to college, always returning in the summer to ride the range or to lose himself in the mountains. And when the college days were done that old cry of the West, that old craving for the life that knows no restraint nor hindering bonds, beckoned him back inevitably as Fate. Again and again he had gone forth on the world's highway, once to serve in Cuba in the war with Spain, where in a yellow-fever hospital he met for the first time his older brother, who even then was

dying of the pestilence, but always he returned to the freedom of the wilderness. He is a type in himself, who belongs to the time of Lewis and Clark, rather than to this century—a man who lives too late. And there is about him, for all his carefree indifference to the world, something of indefinable pathos. He is quite alone —he has no kinsfolk and few friends. He is a man without a home but the forests, who has renounced human companionship for the solitudes, without a love but the mountains, to whom the greatest sorrow would be the knowledge that he might never look upon them again. * *

A cloud, heavy with rain, drifts across the sky, and big, cool drops splash with a hissing noise in the fire, upon our upturned faces, upon the warm, flower-sown earth which exhales, like incense, the odours of sun-heated soil and summer shower. The bright flames deepen to a blood-red glow and ashes gather like hoar frost on the cooling logs and boughs.

The circle around the fire disperses to seek the narcotic gift breathed by the pines, sung as a lullaby by the voices of trees and streams.

The start for the glacier is made while the day is young. Pack horses and camp are left behind and with the guide leading the way, the tortuous climb is begun. Sheer as those rock-walls seemed to be, there is a footing for the careful ponies, as from narrow ledge to ledge they turn and zigzag up the mountain-face; and naked as those steeps appeared, they are animated with frisking conies and marmots, and hidden among the stones are rarely exquisite flowers. Here the mountain lilies grow, blossoms with brown eyes in each of their three white petals, covered with soft, silvery fur which makes them seem of the texture of velvet. These lilies are somewhat similar to the Mariposa lily of the California Sierras. The ground-cedar, a minute and delicate plant; strange varieties of fern and moss,

and everchanging, unfamiliar flowers appear as we ascend, until, wheeling dizzily hundreds of feet above the basin upon the slight and slippery trail, with things beneath dwarfed by distance into a pigmy world and things above looming formidably, the increasing altitude shears the rocks and leaves them bare and grim. The air grows sharp with icy chill, great billowy, low-trailing clouds drag over the mountain-tops, down the ravines and float in detached banners in free spaces below. Broad stretches of snow lie ahead. The painstaking ponies pick their way across them, for it is fifteen feet down to solid ground. Sluggish streams creep between banks crusty with old ice, and pretty falls, broken into lacy meshes of foam, cascade down a parapet of rock and baptize us as we pass. In this spot the stone wall has been worn into a grotto where the water plays as in a fountain. From every little fissure ferns dart their long green lances

and feathery fronds, and the rocks are grown over with moss.

From our eyrie we look down into a small lake called Peary's, sunk within dark and desolate cliffs, shattered and ground down into fantastic forms. It is but partly thawed and its cold, blue-green centre is enclosed in opaque, greenish-white ice and drifts of snow. Indeed snow is everywhere in broken drifts—in the furrowed mountain-combs and along the level in smooth white stretches. Close to the margin of the ice-sealed shores is a grotesque, sapless, scrubby vegetation, as strange in its way as the brilliant-hued waters or the rocks that impress us with huge antiquity and elemental crudeness, as though we stood face to face with Earth's infancy, close in the wake of ebbing, primeval seas. But for all the savage roughness and arctic chill this is a scene to cherish and remember—the blue cup of heaven, flecked with a thistledown of clouds, the black menace of shivered

rock-crests, the dazzle of the snow and the darkly beautiful waters that are neither blue nor green yet seemingly of both colours, held fast in the circle of cold, pale ice.

Above this lake, down an overhanging wall, are more little falls, indeed the whole country is interlaced with them as though the life-blood of the mountains flowed in silver veins upon the surface. Within the hollow over the stone barrier lies Nansen's Lake, even more frigid in its ice-sheath, more palely green in the little patch of water which the sun has laid bare. And although the mountains soar tremendously, yet ever and anon the course lies upward over the frowning brows, over the very crowns of the Range, until the high peaks, stripped of atmospheric illusion, stand stark and naked to the gaze. There is in this sudden intimacy with the fellows of the clouds, the veiled lords of upper air, an awe which we feel before powers incomprehensible.

At last the trail ceases; overhead are cliffs no horse could climb. The guide ties the ponies, and with a stout rope clambers ahead up a smoothly sculptured parapet. We follow him and find ourselves on a bleak waste which leads to a small basin, strewn with great boulders and lesser rocks, dark and of the colour of slate. Growing upon these rock-heaps are masses of flowering moss starred by tiny pink buds and blossoms, or white spattered with the crimson of heart's blood. And now the guide begins to whistle—a long, plaintive note which is answered presently by a similar sound and a shrill, infantile treble, cheeping, cheeping among the stones. Then from the security of her home a Ptarmigan, or Arctic Grouse, hops into the open with her family of five chicks jumping on her patient back, and tumbling, the merest puff-balls, at her feet. She chirps softly to them, proud and dignified in her maternity, ever watchful of her pretty little

brood. She is dressed in Quakerish summer-garb of mottled grey, the feathers covering her to the utmost extremity of her toes. Once the winter snows descend, these birds become as white as the frigid regions which they inhabit. Ordinarily they are very wild, but this little mother, knowing only friendliness from human visitors, comes forth trustfully with her beloved young, suffers them to be handled and caressed and she, herself, with wings dropped in the semblance of a pretty courtesy, jumps into the hand of the guide, and from that perch feeds daintily on the pink and white buds of the moss, as fragilely lovely as the snowflakes to which they appear strangely akin. Indeed, the bird, the flowers and the environing snow all seem more of the cloudland than of the earth.

But there is a sequel to the story of this little grouse, which is, unhappily, a tragedy. Not long after she greeted us, giving an air of friendliness to the forbid-

ding, wind-swept rocks, a Tyrolese came hunting through the mountains. He made his camp near the home of the Ptarmigan and her little ones, and one day when the guide came calling to her there was no answer but the empty whistling of the wind. He called again and again; he searched among the crags and the rock-heaps, then he came upon the ashes of a camp-fire and the mottled feathers and silken down of the Ptarmigan and her chicks. She had been betrayed at last by her trustfulness, and she and her brood had been cruelly sacrificed to the blood-lust and appetite of that enemy of poor dumb things—the man with the gun. * *

From the mossy basin of the Ptarmigan we climb with ropes up a broken escarpment and there upon the very lip of the glacier are blossoms so unearthly in form and colour as to seem the merest ghosts of flowers. One is a dark, ocean-blue bell and another an ashen-green thing furred over with a beard as soft and

colorless as a moth's wing. From this eminence a stormy, wind-tossed little lake, the Gem, flashes angrily-bright waters beneath snow splashed, wonderfully stratified peaks, and there, through a gateway in the mountains, spreading out in a vast plateau of white, lies the glacier, undulating in frozen waves like a polar sea. Even under its shroud of snow one can trace its course by the seams and wrinkles of a congealed current. It is flanked on all sides by the savage, beetling peaks marshalled in endless ranks like the spears and unsheathed lances of war-gods in their domain midway between earth and heaven. Out across the death-white pallor of snow, in the death-chill of the ice-fields, we strike out slowly, cautiously, for the surface of the ice, now hidden by snow, is cleft by crevasses even to the mountain's core, and a misstep, a fall into their depths would be doom. Far away over the white stretches, a gaunt, spectral coyote watches our painful progress. On

Gem Lake

and on we go by a tusk-like peak, the "Little Matterhorn," and ever on to a point where the giant panorama unfolds its mountain - multitudes, its barricaded lakes, and the echo breaks into a chorus that peals out as though each separate crest were possessed of a brazen tongue. These grimly naked heights, split and rent with elemental shocks and the resistance to huge forces, are the cradle of the lightning and the thunder-bolt, the citadel whence the storm-hosts ride down on blackwinged clouds upon the world. And even now phantom troops of clouds come gliding up out of the moist laps of the valleys, out of lakes and streams, passing in shifting wraith-shapes over the mountains, spreading their filmy scarfs across the sky until the livid expanse of snow, showing colourlessly in the grey light, brings to one a vivid picture of the ice-age, of a frozen world and the cold, pitiless illumination of a burnt-out sun.

Fine, pricking points of snow cut with

the sharpness of needle-thrusts; the wind whips through the bleak gaps in the Range and over the glacier, gathering cold and speed as it comes. A chilling numbness deadens our feet and hands. So, wind-buffeted, storm-driven, with the trumpeting gale in our ears, we turn back from the kingdom where Winter is unbroken, and descend through alternate shadow and sun into the blooming beauty, into the golden Summer that swims in the world below, whence snow and cold are only hinted of in a white-breasted, mountain-kissing cloud.

THE LITTLE SAINT MARY'S

CHAPTER IX

THE LITTLE SAINT MARY'S

PERHAPS the most sublime sweep of view within the entire Range is gained from the summit of Mount Lincoln. To accomplish this ascent it is necessary to leave the tortuous "switch-back" trail in full view of Gunsight Pass and strike out over a trackless mass of shattered rock, upward toward the peak. The way is steep and difficult, the footing slippery and insecure. The muscles strain to quivering tension, the breath comes in gusty sighs and still the mighty heap of dull rose and green rock rears its jagged crest against the throbbing sky. But even if the climb were tenfold longer and the goal tenfold harder to win, it would be a faint-hearted seeker after the

beautiful who would hesitate to make the sacrifice of toil for the magnificent reward that awaits him.

The rugged pedestal of stone that crowns the peak, drops almost precipitately three thousand six hundred feet, and directly below, in a gorge formed by this and a second chain of lofty mountains, lie two jade-green lakes, the Little Saint Mary's, joined by a slender, far-leaping waterfall. So immense is the distance, that this fall, spanning the seventeen hundred feet between the upper and lower lakes, does not break the brooding quiet with the whisper of an echo. The slim, white column parts upon the rocks into a diamond shape, and when, happily, the sunshine catches in its spray, it becomes a tangle of rainbows. But now, it unfolds its silver scarf silently, colourlessly as a ghost, and the green lake, so far below, receives the pouring tide with never a ripple to mar its smooth surface. The shadow gathers in the gorge and along

the mountains, the pines are darkly green and in sharp contrast, the unmelted snow fields lie pale and gray-white to the very rim of the lakes forming a setting as of old silver. After the first shock of that sublimity has left the senses free of its thrall, a vast panorama unfolds, dominated by the majesty of mountain-lords flanked and crowded by range upon range of others, rising in lessening undulations to the horizon's rim, as though a sea whose giant billows strove to smite the sky in the throes of an awful storm, were suddenly transformed to stone.

In the crushing might of these great spaces, peering over the brink of the mountain top into the bosom of the smooth, still lakes as coldly beautiful as an emerald's heart, that half-mad idea of self-annihilation clutches at the mind. Perhaps it is the exhilarating leap of the waterfall that tempts one, or perhaps the hypnotic charm of the deep-set, jewel-bright pools, or perhaps some unguessed

secret of gravity which impels the tottering atom into the depths of life-absorbing space. It is the same terrible, savage joy, the magnetism of elemental force which we feel as we stand on the brink of the Grand Cañon of the Yellowstone, with the glorious, brave call to death crying from the water voices, while the whisper of life sounds sweetly from the vocal winds of heaven.

And even as we gaze, the sun's light dies and the world is ashen pale. Suddenly over the distant ranges, storm clouds come trooping in black hosts. A heavy silence falls, broken now and again by the boom of thunder and the frightened cry of shelter-seeking birds. Perched upon a point of rock, silhouetted against the sky, a bighorn sheep watches the gathering tempest, unmindful of the muttering thunder and the ominous glow of lightning kindling in the sable-winged array. There is something noble about him as he turns his crest upward to bear

the onslaught of the blast. The purple of the mountains overhanging the lake deepens to black—the blue-black of a clear, night sky—and the snow filling the ravines lies passionless and white as death. Beneath the driving storm-banners, a luridly vivid light casts its reflection upon the earth in a gilded path, revealing the smallest detail of valley and height before the darkness wraps them in its mantle. The Kootenais for one brief instant shine like towers of brass and a pallid mist overhanging an arm of the remote Flathead Lake becomes a golden fleece, then the garish glare passes and mystery and shadow settle down. Violet tongues of lightning dart from the trailing clouds, the martial fifing of the wind makes shrill music through the bleak cairns and empty wastes, and great, splashes of rain fall fragrantly, refreshingly upon the warm ground. But in all the tumult, the cold, jade-green lakes lie unshaken, calm. So truly are they the

mountains' brides, held securely in their embrace of stone, that not even the wild riding of the gale nor the shivering thunderbolt disturbs their untroubled depths, while their champions, the peaks, in helmets of pale ice do battle with the elements.

The deafening cannonade becomes fainter, the sword-thrust of lightning strikes at other quarry, and the storm, with torn banners dragging low down the mountain sides, like routed hosts in retreat, follow the wake of the thunder, the lightning and the tempest-ridden wind. And as the sun shines forth from the heavens a transformation beams like a blessing from every crag and rock. Still wet with the summer rain, they take on strangely beautiful hues of sparkling rose colour, and green like that of the mother ocean, and the naked, glacier-ground escarpments reveal the exquisite illuminations wrought in flowing, multi-colored bands, in subtle shade and wordless rune,

of the record book wherein is writ the history of æons.

Through the dazzle of the sun the sea of mountains re-appears, a flowing tide of purple billows growing more ethereally blue in the distance until they seem but the azure shadow of heaven. And far beneath in the deep, dark gorge, cool with perpetual shade, flanked by mighty mountain walls, are the polished jade-green lakes and the fall, spinning its endless silver skein into the untroubled waters below.

TRACK OF THE AVALANCHE

CHAPTER X

THE TRACK OF THE AVALANCHE

THE trail to Avalanche Basin starts from the shores of Lake McDonald and plunges almost immediately into forests mysterious with primeval grandeur. Perhaps their denseness is the reason for the wealth of rank-growing weed and shrub that forms one vast screen beneath the spreading branches of pine, tamarack and kingly cedar trees. Whether this is the cause or not, the trail is richer in vegetation than any other that lays open the secrets of the forest's heart. Tall, juicy-stalked bear-weed, devil's walking cane, prickly with venomous thorns, slim, graceful stems of wild hollyhock crowned with pale, lavender blossoms, and broad-leafed thimble berry, bearing fragile, crapy-petalled flowers,

weave their verdure into a tangled mass. An occasional path crushed down freshly shows where a bear has lately been, for these lavish brakes are a haunt of the three varieties that dwell in the surrounding mountains—the black, the brown and the silver tip, or grizzly. Strange sounds come up out of the silence, borne through dim, dark vistas where shy things peep and dry twigs snap under careful, stealthy tread. A woodpecker drums resonantly on the bole of a tree; shrill, elfin music quavers with reedy sweetness from the security of dense thickets. A haunting spell steals over the heart and turns the mind to thoughts of sirens, water sprites, and Piping Pan, for in spite of generations of culture, somewhat of that ancient worship of the Wild is revived in us when we are in the virgin woods. The hypnotic charm of the great silence and solitude possesses us and there comes a feeling as of memory of half-forgotten things lived in a dream,—or was it

reality? The inarticulate voices of the past come calling in sylvan melody out of the closed lips of the centuries, re-awakening the life of our forebears and revealing to us a fleeting glimpse of something which we cannot define or understand. In this spell of the wilderness we not only feel the emotion of young world-life and race-childhood, but that of our own more personal childhood when the pursuit of a butterfly or a flower winged our feet and warmed our hearts. It may be the scent of a familiar shrub, the flight of a bird, or even the shimmer of dew that brings us afresh, for a moment, that gaily painted memory which the years may dim but never quite obliterate.

The trail is dark with shadow,—the awe of the woods,—roofed with boughs and so still that we seem to hear the breathing of the trees. A sudden turn unfolds a little lake, bright with a living pattern of lily-pads, bursting buds and golden water-lilies. Through a rift in

the pines the distant mountains appear; then the green tide of branches flows together and there is nothing but silence and shadow and the forest. The woods deepen. Low, bushy maples grow among the pines, Colorado spruce sheds its silver sheen amidst the more somber foliage, and towering high above the loftiest pines and tamaracks, of magnificent circumference and sweep of limb, are the cedars, the Lords of the Forest. Off to one side of the trail, among the thick-sown trees, is a giant boulder completely covered with moss, a throne fit for Pan. The pines around it are of goodly size, yet they sprang and grew, perhaps centuries after that huge stone came hurtling downward in a great avalanche, or was borne from the mountain tops by the slow progress of a glacier.

Again the forest pageant changes. There are groves of pine stricken with hoary age, bearded like patriarchs with long, pendent streamers of colourless moss;

then comes a young growth of pine, foredoomed to early death which already shows in the bronze of premature decay. It is a beautiful spot, nevertheless, balsam-sweet and strewn with needles that nurture violets of yellow and purple, twin flowers and Queen's Cups.

There is a sound like wind among the trees though not a branch stirs, and presently there bursts into view a sight of wild, exhilarating grandeur. A swift, tumultuous stream rushing down a steep, narrow channel, clean-cut as a sabre stroke, dashes headlong into a rainbow-ridden fall. The volume of water is churned into a passion of swirling foam that flings its light mist heavenward to descend again in rain. Ferny, mist-fed, moss-grown banks slope gently to the declivity and over smooth, emerald cushions, lacy leaf and trailing boughs, tiny, crystal drops, glinting prismatic hues, tremble and pass away. The air is very sweet with a new and unfamiliar fra-

grance, and amidst the moss, half hidden beneath grosser leaf and protruding root, is a flower, the loveliest of all the lovely woodland host. It is a small, snowy blossom of five petals and a golden heart, growing on a slender stem from a cluster of glossy, earth-clinging leaves, and as though to hide its chaste, shy beauty, the modest flower turns its face downward towards the ground. Its scent is strong and heavy like that of the magnolia. The guide, who travels the mountains over from the earliest budding to the ultimate passing of the flowers, has never seen this stranger blossom before, and we find it on no other trail. It was unknown, unnamed, so we call it the Star of the Mountains and leave it blooming in the secrecy of that elfin dell.

Above the thunder of the fall sounds a slight, shrill bird note and through the clouds of spray darts a little brown bird, dipping almost into the boiling current, rising upward with a graceful swell and

a wild, free lilt, perching finally on a tiny point of rock just over the shock and roar of the flood. This strange little winged sprite is a water-ouzel who makes her home and raises her young upon these insecure, spray-drenched walls, with the water-challenge pealing its menace and breathing its chill on her nest. She and her kind haunt the lonely mountain creeks and rivers, seeking some fall or cataract that flings its spray and sings its song to the silent, ice-imprisoned world. Once the mating season is over and the young are fledged, each bird takes its solitary flight and becomes a veritable spirit of the woodland streams.

The dense forests become broken and sheer cliffs rise to stupendous heights. Upon their sharp and slender pinnacles wild goat and bighorn sheep dwell, and in passing we see a goat so far away on those dizzy steeps that he seems the merest patch of white. Through this gorge, between the mountains, are deep hewn fur-

rows where year after year, century after century, the burden of ice from the peaks descends in avalanches. In the Spring when the first thaw begins, a deafening roar like a cannonade heralds the furious onslaught of ice and snow. At such times the Avalanche Trail is a dangerous way to travel, and even now a distant booming reminds us that the mountain forces are never idle, that in their serenity there is force, in their mystery there is still the energy of creation.

Through this narrow passage between overhanging crags, the trail continues until, bearing upward, it suddenly crosses a pretty, milky-hued stream, and thence to a hill-side overlooking a sheet of water opaque and pearly white, in a setting of dark-browed woods. It is Avalanche Lake. The water is perfectly calm, not a breath of air rustles the slightest leaf, but there is no reflection of throbbing, blue sky, of green woods or purple mountains —it does not thrill to the passion of the

Summer, flash back azure and gold and picture in its responsive heart the glories of earth and heaven. Because of this, it is different from all the other lakes of these mountains and the shell-like whiteness of its surface, pallidly beautiful as a great pearl, has a peculiar beauty none the less striking for its strangeness. The cause of the milkiness of these waters seems at first without satisfactory explanation, but as we examine them more closely we see that they are charged with infinite multitudes of tiny air bubbles, and every stream that feeds the lake, having fallen from enormous heights, is likewise full of infinitesimal air beads. On the other hand, some contend that the water, pouring down from the glacier is white with particles of finely pulverized rock.

Pushing straight past the lake, through almost impenetrable thickets of whipping willows that fight like live things to guard from vandal footsteps what lies beyond, the journey reaches its climax in

Avalanche Basin. There, in that vast amphitheatre sculptured from the living rock by glaciers, carved and scarred by innumerable avalanches descending through the ages, overhung by the Piegan ice fields, six silver streams leap the full height of the great rock walls. The falls seem to melt away before they touch the reality of earth, veritable spirits, born of the snowdrift and the sun; white ghosts spending themselves in spray to reascend into the clouds.

A rich growth of green grass, coloured with broad splashes of Indian Paint Brush, covers the sloping floor of the basin. Standing on its extreme elevation upon a platform of rock, and thence overlooking the country that lies ahead, the scene is one of uplifting majesty. Below, within the sombre circle of the pines, is the lake, palely fair as a white sea shell or a milk opal whose latent colours never quite shine forth from its cloudy depths. Farther still, is the gorge, opening like

On the Trail to Mt. Lincoln

a gateway into the region of the avalanche, and farther still, is Heaven's Peak, mingling with the cloudless sky. The strata on these mountains laid bare as though but yesterday they were rent asunder, flow in undulating ribbons of colour varying from red-violet to dull, antique gold. But between the quivering sky of Summer and the warm, flower-sown earth, is a ghostly tide of purple haze, an amethystine shadow which touches every rock and tree and peak with magical illusion. And through that veil, as through enchantment, each rock, each tree, each peak is transfigured and for a brief hour is given a semblance of the divine. The gorge is filled with flowing purple, the glorified gateway might be Heaven's Gate, even as the dominant mountain, royal in the thickening blue distance, is Heaven's Peak.

Here the sordid world seems to melt away; the sunshine has got into our blood and the transfiguring haze has penetrated

even to our hearts. We seem so intimately a part of this mighty, primeval place where the infinity of the past and the infinity of the future are married in one great mystery, that we dare to listen for secrets of the one from the chant of the falls; to lift the veil of circumventing blue and peer into the other. So, standing upon that rock platform, from the reality of the present we speed our souls into the ideality of Time's poles. Though the song of the water-voices that have sung æons, rings in our ears, and the living letter of the world-book is shown in the mountain's open page, we may not know the portent of either message. And though we gaze with seeking vision through the shadow into the ultimate blue above, the haze draws its protecting garment thicker, closer about the treasure-house of Nature, and the sun darts amber lances earthward to blind aspiring eyes. So we pass humbly upon our way, the water-voices singing in our ears, the arch

of Heaven trailing its garment over earth, still guarding the riddle of the future in its azure keep.

INDIAN SUMMER

CHAPTER XI

INDIAN SUMMER

AFTER the Summer's ripe maturity has vanished with the first autumnal storm, there steals over the world a magical Presence. It has no place in the almanac; it comes with a flooding of amber light and a deepening of amethyst haze; it plays like a passing smile on the face of the universe and like one, vanishes with the stern rebuff of the wintry blast. What jugglery the sun and earth and the four winds of heaven have wrought no mortal man can tell, but certainly by some divine alchemy the deadening blight is turned into gold, and upon the lap of the world there lies, instead of the appointed Fall, a changeling season, the faery-child of Nature, illusive, fleeting as a flock of yellow butterflies, a shim-

mer of radiant wings—the Indian Summer!

The whole earth is under the spell of the mad, sweet witchery. The forests are decked in a gay masquerade, too glorious to be real, and our own sober senses are half-mastered by the delusion that the dead Summer is come to life again. In open places where the fingers of the sun still warm the moist ground, absent-minded bluebells, strawberries and yellow violets bloom on forgetful that they should already be taking their winter's rest. And it is strange with what pleasure we seize upon these fragile blossom-friends; with what childish joy we caress their pale petals so soon to be laid low. Yet in the warm air lurks a hidden sting, the bitter-sweet of sun and frost; in the very effulgence of life is the foreshadowing of death. Already on the heights streamers of cloud gather, leaving in their wake the dazzle of fresh snow. And beneath these low-streaming clouds, slanting earthward

in broad, down-pouring rays, is a pure white light upon the mountains. The light on the mountains! What a revelation it is! The windows of heaven are flung open and the celestial beams of Paradise illumine God's Cathedral Domes, the peaks, for a brief space before sky-wrought vestments of snow cover the altar of His Sanctuaries.

The trails of yesterday are barred. For prudence sake we must keep to the low country or risk the fate of being "snowed in." Therefore we choose the Kintla Road and Camas Creek, where a large band of moose roams in the forest solitudes, hoping to reach Quartz Lakes near the Canadian line before we shall be driven back by the cold. The pine-sweet air fills us with the very spirit of the woods as we strike out over the gilded trail through forests transfigured into a welter of gorgeous hues, past deep-cleft ravines purple as the heart of a violet, to dim lilac mountains that melt into the

blue. What is it that is mystical, spiritual, if you will, in this colour of violet? It is not like the robust, tangible green of the trees, the definite reality of the flowers' multi-coloured petals. We cannot lay our hands upon it any more than we can grasp a sunbeam, for like hope deferred, it lies forever beyond our reach. We see it unwind its royal haze through gorge and forest; we watch it fade into pale lavender on the ultimate pinnacles of the range, but if we follow it what do we find? Mere yawning cleft or greenwood grove or jagged strata of dull rock. Where is the subtle violet, the dim dream lavender? Fled as subtly as the shadow of a wing! Perhaps it *is* a shadow of the divine, the soul-essence common to man and the flower at his feet, the dumb, stone mountains, the living air and the heaven that embraces all in its enduring keep.

We pass into the deep, unbroken shadow of virgin woods where bushes burn with crimson rosehips, the thimbleberry

shines in its autumn garb of yellow, the tamarack gleams golden among its somber brethren, the pines, and strange, bright shrubs set us forever guessing. We emerge into a billowing field of wild hay, fringed with trees, above which we can see the metallic sharpness of the mountains. Shining over all impartially, shedding its glory upon our souls, is the dominant sun whose broad rays break into a mist of ruddy gold. Again we dip into eternal shadow, the horses' hoofs sound with a dull cluck as they sink in and are lifted from the soft mold. Often we are startled by the sudden whirr of wings as frightened grouse fly to shelter. Fungus thrusts evil, flame-coloured tongues from the damp, sweet soil and a marvelous variety of moss and lichen trace their patterns on logs, tree stumps and upon the wind-thrown forest trees that toss their gnarled roots high above our heads in an agony of everlasting despair. We splash through Dutch Creek, Camas Creek and

many another, and as we pause to eat a frugal midday meal on the banks of one of these, we find upon a trailing limb, a dying butterfly. Poor little sprite of yesterday! Its bright wings palpitate feebly and it suffers us to take it in our hands without making an effort to escape. The last of its gay brethren, the blossom-lovers, its hour is come and with its final strength it has fluttered to this friendly leaf to die. So, very gently we put it back upon its chosen resting place, leaving it to join ghostly bright winged flocks in the sunshine of some immortal Arcady.

From a high ridge which falls away abruptly into a water-hewn declivity, we look through broad, open vistas far below at the North Fork of the Flathead River. The stream takes its way between banks of fine gray pebbles, parting now over a sandy bar in slender green ribbons, then uniting in one broad current, again separating to curl in white foam-frills around a boulder or

little island. Mild and limpid as the river now appears there is evidence of its flood-tide fury in uprooted trees and livid scars along its banks. Working silently and secretly near the water's edge is a beaver. We can scarcely distinguish him as he toils patiently, bringing to our minds the old Selish legend that the beavers are a fallen tribe of Indians, doomed by the Great Spirit to expiate an ancient wrong by constant labor in their present shape. But some day after the appointed penance, the Indians believe that the beavers will resume the form of men and come into their own again.

For two days we ride farther and farther into the wilderness, camping by night and taking up the trail with the early dawn. And as we penetrate deeper into the wild the pageant changes only to become more sublime. Clumps of slenderly graceful silver poplars with gray, satin-smooth boles and branches that burst into a shower of golden leaves, shed glory

upon our way. Dense woods of yellow pine whose giant trunks hold all the shades of faded rose, and silvery-green Colorado spruce overshadow us and once we find ourselves in a grove of yellow tamarack hung with streamers of black moss. Years upon years ago a forest fire whose fury was nearly spent had scorched these trees with its hot breath, changing the feathery moss into flowing streamers of black—veritable mourning weeds —which contrast sharply with the golden foliage. Even now it is easy to fancy that the fire still burns and each tall tamarack is a pillar of living flame.

The nights are no less wonderful than the days. The melon-coloured harvest moon floats high in the blue-black heavens, touching the priestly trees with its white rays. We sit beside our camp fire listening to the crackle of dry twigs beneath a cautious tread, the occasional whistle of a stag and the ominous note of an owl hooting among the pines. Some-

times we fancy that green and amber eyes burn the darkness, and we cling close, close to the primal birthright of the race —the flaming brand—which raises its bright barrier now as in the age of stone, between mankind and the predatory beasts of the wild. The wooded hosts seem to press down with stifling persistence upon us and an indefinable terror creeps into our hearts, the inherent fear of man, the atom, of Nature, the fathomless, the unknown.

As these nights wear on and we lie upon our couches of fragrant cedar boughs, up out of the gulf of silence the lean-flanked coyotes howl to the moon, and later still, when the pale disc dips beneath the horizon and the shrouded secrecy of before-dawn steals, like a timid ghost, out of the Infinite, the trees find tongue and murmur together though there is no wind and the stream sings with a music as of hidden bells. Strange, elfin sounds, the merest echo of a whisper thrill out of the

quiet and sigh into silence again. A faint patter-patter as of falling thistledown is heard constantly, insistently, inevitably. Can it be the beat of gossamer wings, the trip of faery feet as the woodland sprites hang the grass, the leaves, the finest-spun thread of cobweb with beads of dew, and trim the dark pines, like Christmas trees, with tinsel frost?

Truly the pale morning light breaks upon a transformed and enchanted world. Silver filigree adorns the most commonplace limb and twig. Each pine needle twinkles with a gem giving forth rainbow-hued rays beneath the first steel-cold beams of the sun. The thorn-apple, whose wine-red branches are furred with a white beard, is etherealized into delicate pastel shades of lavender and mauve by a film of hoar frost. Ragged streamers of fantastic mist-shapes rise and float heavily through the moist air, obscuring, then revealing stretches of stream-laced woods and finally rolling away in lessening va-

pour into the lingering dusk of ravines. There is a mighty scene-shifting of Nature in progress. The night phantoms, the colourless dawn-shapes are hurried off, while the sun, riding high in the deepening blue, touches stream and tree and peak with the illumination of the new day.

As we wander about breathing the balsam sweetness of the pine-breath of the new dawn, we make curiously interesting discoveries. By an unfortunate accident we roll a hollow log over and uncover a squirel's winter larder of small pine cones, and at the same time we hear above our heads, in trees so lofty that we cannot penetrate the dense canopy of interlocked limb, the domestic troubles of a pair of these contentious little forest folk. In high treble voices they quarrel and dispute in a perfect hysteria of rage. Upon the damp trail near camp we find large, cloven hoof prints too big for those of a deer, so probably our mysterious visitor

of the evening before was no less a personage than a lordly moose.

We linger on heedlessly, much the same as the absent-minded flowers, clinging as desperately to the woodland as the dying butterfly, deceiving ourselves into the half-belief that Winter is far away. The air is still warm and the light shines on the mountains. And that light lures us on by its thrall to higher altitudes. Down the gorges the snow gathers in deepening drifts and the utmost peaks are white as carven ivory. Still we resolve to make one brave dash for the Quartz Lakes, set one above the other in a chain among sheltering cañons and flanking cliffs. Under the inspiration of the camp fire we discuss the morrow's journey. How splendid it will be to race with the sun; to dare the sudden blizzard that might cut off our retreat, for one brief glimpse of that Upper World we have grown to love with a passion akin to madness. But even as we speak a shadow falls,

and looking upward we see that a gray moth-wing of cloud hides the moon. Surely it is a passing vapour, the merest mist-breath exhaled by the languid night. But no! darker and heavier it unrolls. Wraith shapes glide out from the black mass until the stars are dead and the deep blue dome of heaven is shrouded by an impenetrable pall. That night the heavy rain drops beat a tattoo on the tent and the mournful pines weep the sorrow of ages.

Undaunted we take up the trail, assuring ourselves that soon the fickle weather will be fair again. Occasionally a patch of clear blue shows through the broken flock of hurrying clouds and a wan sun ray steals down for a moment to kiss the woods goodbye. The forests are already drenched and each bough that strikes us pours upon us a little flood of rain. The trees line up in somber walls and as the storm settles into a steady downpour, between their dark fringes flows a narrow, ashen stream of sky. Through the brood-

ing shadow tamaracks kindle, silver poplars huddle together with quivering aureoles of gold, and the austere dusk beneath their boughs is lighted with yellow-leafed thimbleberry, glowing like sunbeams. It seems as though the foliage of those receptive trees and shrubs has absorbed the summer sun to give it forth again when the world should be cloaked in shadow. So complete is the illusion that oftentimes, as a shaft of light gleams through the tree tops, we cry exultantly:

"The sun is shining!"

In another second we see that it is but the tamaracks burning like tall, yellow candles through the autumnal gloom, shedding their blessed gift of light to cheer us on our way.

When we gain the lower Quartz Lake, a deep green sheet of water bordered by wooded shores, the heavy clouds drag low and a rainbow arches the lake. We halt, uncertain, raising our eyes questioningly to the heights beyond that frown blackly

through the tattered tapestry of the clouds. The mountains are angry! Very reluctantly, sorrowfully, we turn to retrace our steps, thinking of future seasons of sun and warmth and other quests of the sublime that shall end in triumph. At each gust the shearing wind despoils the silver poplars of their crowns until the naked branches leap wildly in a fantastic dance of death.

The changeling season, the faery-child of Nature has fled as mysteriously as it came—fled like a flock of yellow butterflies into some ethereal region to await its perennial resurrection. Dull Autumn settles drab as a moth upon the saddened world and the light has died from the mountains.

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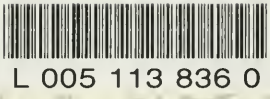
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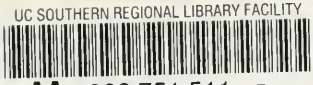
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